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SATCHEL SERIES, NO. 35.

SPOOF EN DYKE

W. B. SMITH & CO., PUBLISHER
27 BOND STREET, NEW YORK.

MR. AND MRS. SPOOPENDYKE.

BY

STANLEY HUNTLEY,

OF THE BROOKLYN EAGLE.

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THE AUTHOR'S CONFESSION.

I HAVE been seduced by a condensed villain — a publisher over a bottle of *Mumm*. Oh! that I had been — mum. The argument was that Mrs. Spoopendyke would never know it, because no married man would be ass enough to show my confessions to my wife. But my brain is clearer, and I realize that Mumm is not always spelled *mum*. I charge my readers that no one of them shall give me away, for Mrs. Spoopendyke is now in blissful ignorance of the fact that I have abused her. The land has countless Mrs. Spoopendykes, and if I am betrayed, like Samson of old, I will soon pull down the temple, and all of you, miserable Spoopendykes, shall perish with me under the crushing weight of awakened conjugal consciousness and scorn.

SPOOPENDYKE.

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MR. AND MRS. SPOOPENDYKE.

I.

THE FIFTEEN PUZZLE.

MR. SPOOPENDYKE of Clinton Street is one of the most cheery, cheerful gentlemen in Brooklyn, and his wife is the soul of good humor.

Friday afternoon Mr. Spoopendyke brought home a "fifteen puzzle," and told his wife he had bet a hat he could solve it.

"'Deed you can," said she, preparing to assist him; "I'd like to know what you can't do;" and she dusted off the table so he wouldn't muss his cuffs.

He pulled out the box. "Now," said he, "you see these blocks run four in a row up to twelve, and then there are three—numbers 13, 14 and 15. I muss them around, and the object is to make them come out just as they were; consecutively, you know."

"Certainly. That's easy;" and she put the 15 block in her mouth while she swashed around with the rest.

"What'n thunder you doing?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke, "you mustn't take 'em out!"

"Oh!" said she, putting the block back upside down,

"You mustn't take 'em out, eh! well, we'll do it with 'em in."

Mr. Spoopendyke moved the cubes around awhile, and then pondered.

"I see," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, "I've got it! put that 12 down there and the 11 up here, and then move 'em around."

He did it and they were worse than before.

"Hold on!" she exclaimed, "now put ——"

"S'pose you hold on," he responded. "This thing works by hand, not steam. You've got to go slow. Now I'll put the 14 there and that lets the 13 come up in place. Then we put the 15 here and slip down the 9."

"That ain't right. That makes it 11, 10, 12. You want to get the 9 up and transpose those."

"Lemme be, will ye? I'm going to fix those. There —now I'll bring down the 12 and carry ——"

"But you can't. You've got ——"

"I haven't either. There's the 14, 15, 13. I've only to make them run 13, 14, 15, and then ——"

"Why, you can't even count. What are you going to do with the 10, 11, 12?"

"Do with them? What d'ye s'pose I'm going to do with them? Think I'm going to bore a hole in 'em and wear them for socks? Talk sense if you know any. Now I'll put the 10 in here and that lets the 9 in. Then we move the 11 up and get the 12 in place."

"But where's your 13, 14 and 15?"

"They are right here, Mrs. Spoopendyke; did you think they'd gone to prayer meeting? Confound a woman around a puzzle, anyway. Just you lemme

figure on this alone, will ye? I guess I know how to fix this."

"Of course you do," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, soothingly; "you can get it if anyone can."

"Just see, now. If I can only get the last three straight, I've got it. H'm—ah! yes. The 15 goes here. Now I've got it. Then the 13 and then the 14. Just move—hold on."

"I see where you're wrong," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You want to move ——"

"I don't want to do any such thing."

"Yes, you do; just move ——"

"Well, if I move it'll be about eight miles from here, where I can have some peace."

"Don't be so touchy; all you've got——"

"If you don't let this puzzling business alone, I'll just make a hole in the air with it. What do you know about it, anyway? I've got it all but three blocks ——"

"Well, I'll show you how to get those."

"Then show me; show me; just show me, that's all. Oh! show me. Why don't you show me how it's done?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke moved them around and then studied awhile.

"Why don't you show me?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "You said you'd show me. I'm waiting to be shown. Go on with your showing. Let the show proceed."

"If one could only get that 12 out of the way so the 13 would come in, we'd be all right," mused Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Oh! certainly, certainly. If— if the 12 had a pair of legs and could build a railroad around the 15

and then would give the 14 a free pass he might ride into his place. Say, Mrs. Spoopendyke, if you'll quit handling that 15 block like a stove lid and take your thumb out of the blank square, I'd be obliged to you. Le'see now. The 14 goes here ——"

"No, it don't; it goes there."

"Goes where?"

"Why there."

"There! Where? There, may mean up the chimney or down my throat. Where? Where do you mean?"

"Why, there, of course; can't you see? I believe you're crazy!"

"I'm not crazy, Mrs. Spoopendyke, nor am I a woman. I might just as well put that block in the fire as where you say. I'll put it here."

"Then you're all wrong. It goes here."

"A minute ago you said it went there. Let it alone, I tell you. Drop it. Put it back where you found it. Now, let things be. I'll move this 12 down here."

"That makes a fine arrangement! Nobody but a lunatic would put it there. Put it here."

"Go way from here. You ain't half witted. I can do this puzzle."

"You can't do anything, you old idiot. You deserve to lose your hat. Go stand around bareheaded and cool your skull, you old heathen. You do a puzzle! You don't know the bottom of the box from the top."

Crash. Down went the outfit, and Mr. Spoopendyke crawled into bed.

Mrs. Spoopendyke rearranged the blocks and went to work at them.

"Thomas," said she, timidly, after a while, "look here."

He looked. She had solved it.

"I could have done it," he growled.

"Yes," said she, "if you had done it in my way."

"You only did it just as I was doing it," he responded. "You picked it up where I left off."

"Yes," she replied, putting out the light, "I picked it off the floor."

II.

PREPARING TO ENJOY THEMSELVES.

"Now we haven't got much time to get ready, my dear," suggested Mr. Spoopendyke, cheerily, "and I won't be late at a dinner-party. I want you to fix up so as to be the best-looking woman at the table. You can get ready in an hour, can't you?"

"I think I can," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, with a titter. "Oh, yes, I can dress in that time, and I hope you won't be disappointed in me;" and the little woman began to take down her back hair.

"You might get my shaving tackle for me," said Mr. Spoopendyke, appropriating the only mirror. "And now I think of it," he continued, after a pause, "my dress-coat needs a button. Sew it on, won't you?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke lugged out the coat and hunted through the broken-down old bag after a button that would do.

"Got that button sewed on yet?" inquired Mr. Spoopendyke, lathering away comfortably.

"In a minute, my dear," responded his wife.

"Well, hurry up; I want you to put these studs and sleeve buttons into my clean shirt."

Mrs. Spoopendyke gradually got around to these offices and laid out the habiliment in readiness for her lord.

"Did you take these stitches in my gloves?" inquired Mr. Spoopendyke.

"Oh! yes, certainly," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, going right to work at it.

"Well, then you can brush my vest and pantaloons, and by that time I'll be ready to have you tie my cravat."

A few moments more found Mr. Spoopendyke arrayed completely.

"Come, you ready?" he demanded, having assured himself that his wife had not accomplished a single step toward her toilet.

"Not quite, dear," responded the lady, with one-half her hair in her mouth and the other half crackling under the brush.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked. "Didn't you say you could be ready in an hour? Didn't you hear me tell you when I came in that we only had an hour to dress in? Why can't you go as you are? You look well enough."

"I was busy fixing your things," faltered Mrs. Spoopendyke, "and I couldn't do two things at once."

"Oh, no! You can't do anything at once. Why didn't you have my things fixed this morning? Why don't you keep house somehow? That dress you've got on is good enough. Why can't you go in that dress?

If you've got to put on all the frills you won't be ready till next fall. Ain't you most ready now? Think I'm going to stand around here like a jug of mineral water?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke twisted up her hair and jammed in the pins. Then she put on her hat and twitched it first to one side and then the other; put one hand up behind and shoved it forward, and then caught hold of it in front and pulled it down.

"Well, if you're ready, let's start," growled Mr. Spoopendyke. "You've been long enough for a telegraph wire, now. Come on."

"Oh! I haven't got my dress on yet," pleaded Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I'll be through in a minute."

"Dod gast the dress!" ejaculated Mr. Spoopendyke. "Where's my paper? Give me my paper and I'll read for a month or two. You won't be ready till spring. Where's the paper?"

"Take a book, dear," recommended Mrs. Spoopendyke, blushing deeply and glancing around nervously.

"I don't want any measly book," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "I want the morning paper. Find that paper the first thing you do, and then you get ready in four seconds."

"I think you'll find the paper behind—the book-case," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, as red as a brick, and she hustled into her skirt and began clawing at it behind in an effort to loop it up straight. "I'm almost ready," she giggled hysterically, as she drew on her waist and buttoned it up nervously. "I'll be ready before you could turn the paper inside out," and she snatched a ribbon from the drawer, tied it in a bow, pinned it at

her throat and backed away from the glass to see how it looked.

"I want to know whether you are going to find that dod gasted paper for me!" thundered Mr. Spoopendyke.

"I'm all ready except my cloak," jerked out Mrs. Spoopendyke. "If you'll hand me my cloak we'll start right away. It's in the closet there." And Mrs. Spoopendyke flopped down on the floor and began putting on her shoes.

"S'pose I'm going to hunt around for that measly cloak?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "Can't you get your things for yourself? I want my paper, and I want it now."

"I can tell you what was in it," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I can tell you all about it while I dress," and she looked up at him piteously, with her face all flushed.

"No doubt," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "You know all about it. All you want is a can of oil and ten men swearing at you all day to be a printing-press. When are you going ——"

"Now I'm all ready, dear," smiled Mrs. Spoopendyke, who wasn't anything of the sort. "You won't need to read now, for we're going."

They started off together, arm in arm, Mr. Spoopendyke growling and his wife hitching at her various garments as they went along.

"Another time we're going out to dinner, you be ready the day before, you hear?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke.

"Yes, dear," responded his wife; and then she thought to herself, "I'm very glad he didn't insist on looking for that paper."

III.

ANNABEL LEE.

'Twas more than a million years ago,
Or so, it seems to me,
That I used to prance around and beau
The beautiful Annabel Lee.
There were other girls in the neighborhood,
But none was a patch to she.

And this was the reason that long ago,
My love fell out of a tree,
And busted herself on a cruel rock;
A solemn sight to see,
For it spoiled the hat and gown and looks
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

We loved with a love that was lovely love,
I and my Annabel Lee,
And we went one day to gather the nuts
That men call hickoree—
And I stayed below in the rosy glow
While she shinned up the tree:
But no sooner up than down kerslup
Came the beautiful Annabel Lee.

And the pallid moon and the hectic noon
Bring gleams of dreams for me,

Of the desolate and the desperate fate
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.
And I often think as I sink on the brink
Of slumber's sea, of the warm pink link
  That bound my soul to Annabel Lee;
And it wasn't just best for her interest
  To climb that hickory tree.
For had she stayed below with me,
We'd had no hickory nuts, may be,
Bnt I would have had my Annabel Lee.

IV.

A PERTINACIOUS LANDLORD.

"ISN'T there such a crime as conduct calculated to provoke a breach of the peace?" asked a nervous-looking man of a police justice, yesterday morning.

"Of course there is," responded the justice.

"Then gimme a warrant for my landlord," demanded the nervous man.

"What has he done?" asked the justice, eying the suitor suspiciously.

"He comes to my house when I've got company and says he wants the four months' rent I owe him, and sits out on the front steps and howls for his money. If I should kick the whole spine out of him, I'd be arrested, wouldn't I?"

"Yes, I think you would. Why don't you pay him?"

"That isn't the question. He comes to my house at four o'clock in the morning and yells through the key-hole, and then he goes up through the vacant house next door and gets on my roof and shouts down the chimney. Says he will have that money. If I should drop a flat iron on him, or blow him up with powder, it would go hard with me, wouldn't it?"

"Pretty apt to. Can't you come to some understanding with him?"

"It seems not. Say, has he got a right to climb over my fence and have fits in my back yard, just because I owe him a little money?"

"Does he do that?"

"Of course he does; and when we haul him in the house, he yells murder and draws a crowd. Have I got a right to maul the life out of him with a club for that?"

"I think not," responded the judge. "Why don't you move?"

"That's got nothing to do with it. I want to know if he is entitled to slip up on the ice and fall through my basement window, and do ten dollars' worth of damage to the glass? Couldn't I mash the stuffing out of him for that?"

"Certainly not."

"But when he lays down on the sidewalk and howls that his mother is dead and he can't bury her because I won't pay what I owe him; haven't I got any remedy?"

"I don't know of any. I think you'd better pay him."

"But isn't it conduct calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, when he comes around with a quart of laudanum and a horse-pistol and threatens to take 'em both right on the premises if I don't put up? Ain't it a crime when he hangs himself to a tree in front of my house with a paper pinned on him that I drove him to suicide? Has he got a right to make faces at my children in Sunday school? Won't the law touch him for coming to my door at daylight as drunk as a lord and claiming he's me, and yelling that I want to get in and lick my wife?"

"I don't think you can do anything but pay him or move. The man has a right to his money."

"That's all I want to know," replied the nervous man, appearing relieved. "I'm the landlord, and my tenant says he'll have me arrested for doing these things. Now you bet he'll put up that wealth or I'll fall off the top of the house and have the inquest in the parlor. A man can't live four months in my house for nothing without going to some trouble, now you hear me;" and the nervous man pranced off glowing all over with grim determination.

V.

THE MEDICINE CHEST.

"My dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, after a long and gloomy pause, "my dear, I'm not feeling very well,

to-night, and I think I'll take some of those anti-bilious pills. That idea of yours, the idea of having a little medicine chest, with everything handy, is an excellent one, and if you can find those pills, I believe I'll take a dose."

"They are just what you need," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, sympathetically; "your tongue is coated and your complexion looks very yellow, lately."

"I don't remember calling on you for any remarks about my complexion, Mrs. Spoopendyke, and as for my tongue being coated, we will assume that it has also got on vest, trousers, and boots. What I asked for was pills, pills, Mrs. Spoopendyke, not oratory."

Mrs. Spoopendyke bustled into the closet, and after considerable search, found a ribbon box with one end knocked out. In it were half a dozen blue papers that belonged to the large end of a seidlitz powder, a dose and a half of boneset, a bursted paper of salts, an empty cough-syrup bottle, two lumps of sugar, four soda crackers, half a lemon, a lump of camphor, a mustard plaster, and seven pill boxes without covers.

"I think these are the pills you want," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, scratching around in the bottom of the medicine chest. "Do you remember whether they were white, brown, or black?"

"I'm not particular about the color," responded Mr. Spoopendyke, sardonically. "What I want is anti-bilious pills. I brought home a box and told you to put 'em away carefully. If you've drowned them in that measly old box it isn't my fault. What I want is pills, anti-bilious pills."

"This looks like them," said Mrs. Spoopendyke,

squashing one between her thumb and finger, and smelling at it cautiously. "Do you remember whether they were sugar-coated?"

"I do not," rejoined Mr. Spoopendyke, "nor do I remember whether they wore a stand-up collar or a plug hat. If you think I'm going to sit around here like a book on heraldry and furnish you with the antecedents of them pills you've lost sight of our relations, Mrs. Spoopendyke. I want to know whether you can find 'em or not."

"Is this one of them?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, chasing a refractory pellet into a corner and fishing it out with some misgivings. "It looks like it, and I can't think what else it's for. Suppose you take this."

"Does it say so on the cover? Does the cover say it's anti-bilious?"

"I can't find the cover," responded Mrs. Spoopendyke, helplessly. "Here's a box; will that do?"

"Oh! certainly, anything'll do for me!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "All I want is a box and a pill. It don't make any difference whether they go together or not. Do you know a pill from a post-office? Can you tell the difference between a pill box and a policeman? S'pose I'm going to eat one of those things without knowing whether it's a railroad bond or a corn plaster? What did ye mix 'em up for anyhow? S'pose I'm going to speculate in those pills till one hits my liver? Think I'm going to take 'em in courses, like an alumni banquet? Have I got to get out a search warrant to find them pills?"

"Suppose you put on this mustard plaster," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke, holding it up before him.

"Mustard is the best thing in the world to excite action of the liver."

"Oh! yes, certainly, certainly," sneered Mr. Spoopendyke. "What a head you've got for physic! If I could get you to hold a red light in your mouth and tie a soda fountain around your neck I'd start you for a drug store. How are you going to tie a mustard plaster around my liver? Don't you know the difference between a mustard plaster and a box of pills? What did you spill 'em for, anyhow? Think I'm going to eat mixed pills, like candy? Been trying to make a pill salad, haven't you? Going to find them dod gasted things this week?"

"Let me think," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, musingly. "These white ones are quinine; these brown pills are opium, now I remember, and the black ones are the ones you want. How many make a dose?"

"None!" yelled Mr. Spoopendyke. "'Spose I'm going to take those things on their color? Think I'm going to run the chances of filling myself up with opium just to test your eye for tints? Think I'm going to shut my eyes and draw a pill like I was playing a game of forfeits? I don't want any pills anyway. Throw 'em out! Pitch that measly medicine chest out of the window! Next time I want pills I'll—"

Mrs. Spoopendyke went to the closet, put the chest away, and as she did so noticed a little box that had fallen out on the shelf.

"Here they are, dear," she said, smiling, and pointing out the label to her liege.

"Oh, yes, of course!" growled Mr. Spoopendyke, "you found 'em, didn't you? Couldn't give 'em to me

at first, could you? Another time, Mrs. Spoopendyke, I want you to let things alone. Don't ever put anything more of mine in that chest; you hear me? I don't want these things to-night, 'cause I ain't sure I'm bilious, but when I am I want these pills where I can find 'em, you understand? I don't want to go rooting around the house after pills again, when I'm sick, or I'll quit housekeeping and go to boarding. You understand that?"

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, slipping the pills into her pocket.

VI.

COULDN'T FEEL AT HOME.

"STRANGER, have yer got some bitin' whiskey, suthin' that takes the innards right by the collar, and makes a man think he's br'ilin' for an hour afterwards?" asked a gentleman in a butternut suit and a coon-skin cap, at a fashionable Brooklyn bar, yesterday.

"I think I've got what you want," said the barkeeper. "Try this."

The stranger smelled it and shook his head dolefully.

"Do ye think this would make a man dig up his dead enemies and lick 'em over again?" he asked. "Would a slug of this pizen get a fellow to induce his mother to murder his wife, and then run for sheriff, so as to hang the old woman for the crime?"

"I don't know about that," said the barkeeper, "it's pretty strong fluid."

"I know. But is it strong enough to make a man rob his own daughter and then lick the daylight out of her for losin' her money? Would it be what you would use if you wanted to salt your wife down and deal her out in a boarding-house for boned turkey, extra prime? Would you drink it if you felt like burning down a church full of children, so as to get the nails out of their boots? That's the kind of liquor I want."

"Here's some terribly bad whiskey, if that's what you are after," said the barkeeper, putting out another bottle.

Again the stranger smelled, and shook his head sadly.

"I am surprised at yer, barkeep. Yer don't understand the finer feelin's. I want suthin' that would make me rob the donation box of an orphan asylum. Suthin' that would make me kick a sick woman overboard and pound her with a board afterwards. I want liquor that makes a fellow bury his mother alive and plough her under for fertilizer. Suthin' that would make a man set his children to stealin' so he could give 'em away and get witnesses fees for convictin' 'em. Have yer got anything of that sort?"

"That's the worst I've got," said the horrified barkeeper. "You can take it or leave it."

"The fact is," explained the stranger, as he poured down half a pint of the material without a shudder, "the fact is that I live in Dakota, and I was feelin' homesick. So I thought if I could only get a taste of the genuine old stuff it would raise my spirits. But

that isn't the whiskey I wanted. This makes me feel like lendin' money, and it don't do me no good. Good-by, barkeep."

And the homesick stranger turned mournfully away.

VII.

ALONE.

THE moonlight falls on the old barn floor,
Through many a rent and chink,
And clings around the old house door,
In many a silver link.
But the roar of the fire and the crash of the flail
Died many a moon agone,
And the gleams that stream like a snowy gale,
Are dancing there alone.

The bucket-chain creaks in the empty well,
And the swallows live in the eaves;
Long, long ago the chimney fell,
And the doorstep is buried in leaves.
The dust and the shadows in rivalries
Have seized the old hearth stone,
And the dusky trees, in the evening breeze,
Moan and groan alone.

The moonbeams on the roof-tree fall
With soft and tender tread,
And the dewdrops fall through the wounded wall
Like tear-drops for the dead —

And the shadow of death, cold, dark, intense,
Is over all — save one,
For the old tom-cat still clings to the fence,
Though he growls and howls alone.

VIII.

A SLIGHT INDISPOSITION.

"THAT's better," groaned Mr. Spoopendyke, as his wife arranged the cool pillows under his head; "now I can die looking out upon the trees and the sky;" and Mr. Spoopendyke assumed a resigned expression of visage, and gazed out of the corner of one eye upon a bare alianthus tree and half a dozen telegraph wires.

"Oh! you won't die," said Mrs. Spoopendyke cheerfully. "You're only a little sick, and you'll get over it."

"That's all you know about it," snarled Mr. Spoopendyke. "To hear you talk one would think you only had to be fitted up with little beds and a bad smell to be a government hospital. I'm down sick, I tell ye, and I don't want any fooling about it."

"Well, well," cooed Mrs. Spoopendyke, "don't excite yourself. Keep quiet and you'll get well."

"Much you'd care," muttered Mr. Spoopendyke, turning on his side and resting his cheek on his hand, an attitude generally assumed by martyred spirits on the approach of dissolution.

"Will you take your drops again, dear?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke. "It's time for them."

"No, I won't. They're nasty. I haven't had anything but drops for a week. From the way you administer drops one would think you was the trap-door of a hanging machine. Gimme some figs."

"But there ain't any figs, dear. I'll go and get you some," said Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"That's it," growled her husband. "You only want an excuse to leave me to die alone. Why haven't ye got some figs? You might know I'd want figs. Got any citron?

"No, I haven't any citron, but I won't be more than a minute away, and I'll get you any fruit you want."

"Oh! yes. You'd get it, I've no doubt. What you want is a rail fence around you and a gate off the hinges to be a dod gasted orchard. Fetch me some strawberries."

"Why, strawberries are out of season. There ain't any in the market now."

"I supposed you'd say that," moaned Mr. Spoopendyke. "You've always got some excuse. If I should die you'd have an apology ready. Gimme something to take this taste out of my mouth."

"What would you like, dear?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Soap, dod gast it! gimme soap, if ye can't think of anything else," demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Mebbe you ain't got any soap. At least you wouldn't have if I wanted it. Got any cherries?"

"No. They are out of season, too. There are some grapes in the closet.

"Don't want any measly grapes. If I can't have what I want I don't want it. Where's those drops? Why don't you give me my medicine? Going to let me die for want of a little attention? Want the life insurance, don't ye? Going to gimme those drops before the next election?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke ladled out the dose, half of which went down Mr. Spoopendyke's gullet and half over the front of his night-shirt.

"That's it," he howled. "Spill 'em. They're for external application. Put 'em anywhere. Pour 'em up the chimney," and Mr. Spoopendyke fired the spoon across the room.

"Have a piece of orange to take the taste away?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, pleasantly.

"No, I won't," objected her spouse. "Gimme a piece of muskmelon."

"I don't believe they have muskmelons in November," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Of course they don't," reasoned Mr. Spoopendyke. "They don't have anything when I'm sick. It's a wonder they have houses. It's a miracle that they have beds. I'm astounded to think they have doctors and drug stores. I've got to hurry up and die, or they won't have any undertakers, or coffins, or graves. Gimme a piece of orange, will ye? S'pose I'm going to lie here and chaw on the taste of those drops for a month?"

"You'd like these grapes," suggested his wife.

"No I wouldn't either. What do you want me to eat 'em for? Got any interest in the grape trade? Get any commission on those grapes? Anybody pay

ye to make me eat 'em? One would think you only wanted an iron arbor and four small boys climbing over you to be a grape-vine. Where's my pill?"

"You took your pill, dear," replied his patient wife.

"Oh, of course! A pill is out of season now. Can't even have a pill when I feel like it;" and Mr. Spoopendyke groaned in spirit and looked dismal. "Now sit down and don't move. I want to sleep. Don't you make a bit of noise if you want me to live."

And Mrs. Spoopendyke held her breath and never rustled a feather while her husband lay and glared out of the window for an hour and a half.

IX.

LES INCOMPREHENSIBLES.

AFTER VICTOR HUGO.

BOOK I.

A man sat on a picket fence.

Picket fences were invented by Charlemagne and improved upon by Charles II. of England.

Still the man sat on the fence.

BOOK II.

The fence surrounded a tall, gloomy building. The building had shutters at the window. The man was a Frenchman. There were other Frenchmen in the same neighborhood. They were in bed. Frenchmen were

discovered by Oliver Cromwell, and subsequently patented by the author. They are copyrighted. All Frenchmen not bearing the signature of the author are spurious.

It was night. It was a dark night. Darkness is a shadow that rises from the ground when the sun goes down.

The man on the fence was thinking. His name was Lippiatt.

BOOK III.

Lippiatt loved Maronette. Maronette was a girl. She knew Lippiatt. She did not know that Lippiatt loved her.

Maronette lived in the gloomy house. Lippiatt did not tell Maronette that he loved her. He was contented to sit on the fence in front of her house. He was a quiet man. Like all Frenchmen he was the bravest man in thirteen counties. He was a tailor. A tailor is one who promises to have your clothes done Saturday, and then brings them around week after next.

Lippiatt was poor. All heroes are poor.

BOOK IV.

Maronette opened a window and shied an old boot at Lippiatt.

"Is that you, Lippiatt?" she asked.

"Yes," said Lippiatt.

Maronette laughed.

"My father says I must marry the man who will bring him the Norwegian maelstrom," said Maronette.

Lippiatt got off the fence and walked away.

BOOK V.

Like all tailors in France, Lippiatt was a good sailor. He stole a boat and started for the coast of Norway. A fearful storm came on. The world drew on a heavy cloak to protect it from the storm. The sea opened a thousand mouths to swallow Lippiatt. It was hungry for him. His beard and hair were filled with salt. Great, grasping hands of darkness reached down to snatch him.

Lippiatt only laughed.

The sea grew wilder. Monsters of water crowded against the boat. They were reaching for Lippiatt. He steered his boat to avoid them.

A wave averages twenty feet in height. It contains four hundred tons of water. It is thicker at the base than at the top. In that respect it is like a pyramid. But it is not three-cornered. It is oval in shape. A round wave is a waterspout. A waterspout is thick at the top and bottom and slender in the middle.

Lippiatt knew this.

He was not afraid of waves. He was fearful of waterspouts.

BOOK VI.

In four days Lippiatt arrived at the maelstrom.

"It is for Maronette," said he.

The maelstrom is shaped like a funnel. The lower end is at the bottom. The mouth is at the top. It is caused by the tides. The Norwegians suppose it is caused by a hole in the earth. Lippiatt knew better.

He went down in the maelstrom and fastened a rope around the lower end. To this rope he adjusted blocks

and pulleys. Then he climbed out of the pit and fastened the other end of the rope to the masthead. The blocks gave him a purchase.

He rested.

BOOK VII.

Having rested, Lippiatt pulled on the rope. He pulled the maelstrom inside out. The bottom was then at the top. It spun around like an inverted top.

Lippiatt drove a staple into it and fastened his line. Then he set sail. The maelstrom followed.

"I shall marry Maronette," he said.

BOOK VIII.

Another man sat on the picket fence. It was Goudenay. Goudenay loved Maronette. Maronette loved Goudenay.

Goudenay saw something coming into the harbor.

"What is that?" he asked.

It looked like an inverted funnel. It was a thousand feet high.

"I don't know," said Maronette.

She was right. She didn't.

BOOK IX.

Lippiatt disembarked. He took the maelstrom on his shoulders. Then he went to the gloomy house. He hung the maelstrom on the picket fence.

"How do you do, Goudenay?" he asked.

He knew Goudenay. He had disappointed him about some trousers.

"I am happy," said Goudenay; "I am going to marry Maronette."

Lippiatt looked at Maronette.

"Yes," she said, "I marry Goudenay this morning."

BOOK X.

Lippiatt went to the wedding.

He gave Maronette a silver card-receiver.

Maronette smiled.

Lippiatt went back to the picket fence. He ate the maelstrom up.

BOOK XI.

As the wedding party went home, they saw a dead body lying beside the picket fence. The point of the maelstrom was sticking out of the mouth.

"Good gracious!" said Maronette.

"Holy smoke!" exclaimed Goudenay.

It was Lippiatt.

X.

HOW THEY MISSED THE MASQUERADE.

"SAY, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he hurried in, hot and breathless, late from his business, "did you get me a fancy dress for the masquerade to-night?"

"It's all ready," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, beaming. "You go as— let me see—. I go as a Spanish guitar-

girl, and you go as—as—its either Louis Fourteenth, or Oliver Cromwell or Sir Robert Burns, I've forgotten which the man called it."

"I do, do I?" said Mr. Spoopendyke, glaring around. "I go as one of 'em, do I? As they are all dead, and as I will do for all three, p'raps you got a coffin. Show me the coffin. Fetch out the interconvertible catafalque and help me on with it. Has it got sleeves?"

"It isn't a coffin," explained Mrs. Spoopendyke. "It is a doublet and—"

"It's a doublet, is it? Well, that relieves me of one of 'em. I thought from the way you spoke, Mrs. Spoopendyke, it was a triplet. Is there a trousers with it? Got a shirt? I told you to get me a bandit suit, didn't I? Fetch out this Cromwell business! Show me this man Burns! Any sword go with it?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke brought forth a worn red-velvet jacket, trimmed with tarnished braid, and a pair of yellow velvet knee-breeches, slashed up the side. This she supplemented with a felt hat, and a pair of jack-boots armed with spurs.

"Maybe it is a bandit's suit, after all," she suggested.

"Which is the Louis Fourteenth end of this thing?" demanded Mr. Spoopendkye. "Where does the Oliver Cromwell part begin? Show me the Burns element on this schedule! If I'm going to get into this thing chronologically I must begin with the measly king and wind off with the dod gasted poet; which is the king part?" and Mr. Spoopendyke shot out of his business suit and drew on the velvet trousers. "Where's the rest of 'em?" he demanded, surveying an expanse of unclothed limb. "This whole thing is only one leg.

Where's the pair for the other leg? Give me some more trousers;" and Mr. Spoopendyke scowled about him.

"Don't the boots come up to meet them?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, in some trepidation.

Mr. Spoopendyke pulled on the boots, but still there was an exposed space of nearly a foot.

"I s'pose this bare-legged arrangement is the Burns part," grinned Mr. Spoopendyke. "He was a Highlander, and this much of me is Burns. Show me the Cromwell part now. Is that hat it?" and Mr. Spoopendyke put on the hat and breathed hard. "Where's the rest of me? My head and legs are all right; bring out my back and stomach!"

Mrs. Spoopendyke handed him the jacket and he plunged into it with a jerk.

"That what you wanted?" he howled. "Couldn't you make more'n three epochs of me? Didn't the man have but three historical dates? Pull that jacket down a couple of centuries, can't ye? Don't you see the bottom of the dod gasted thing is two hundred years from reaching the waistband of the Burns breeches?" and Mr. Spoopendyke tugged at the abbreviated coat and snorted with wrath.

"Maybe that was the way it was meant to go," argued Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I saw" —

"You sawed off the coat and pants, now s'pose you saw off a rod of this hat and patch 'em out again! When did Cromwell wear that hat? What kind of a bet did he win that on? Say, where's the scaffold that goes with these measly politicians? Fetch out the headsman!" and Mr. Spoopendyke danced into the

closet and out again. "Where's the louse that goes with the Burns part? Bring me some Charles I. to hide my legs! 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' for man was made to mourn because his head was chopped off!" shrieked Mr. Spoopendyke, combining the historical ideas he represented in one grand yell. "Fetch me three suppers for one dod gasted old idiot that trusted his wife to find a suit for him!" and Mr. Spoopendyke thrust his arm to the shoulder through the Covenanter's hat, and split the coat of the lamented Louis from tail to collar-band. "Look out for some Scotch romance!" and he ripped off the pants and fired them into the grate. "Here comes another page in the annals of crime!" and the boots went out the window.

"And we—can't go—go to the—mas—masquerade at all!" sobbed Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Write an epitaph on the back of my neck, and I'll go as a tombstone!" yawped Mr. Spoopendyke. "Put three bells in my side and a torn stair-carpet at my back, and I'll go as a French flat! Discharge the hired girl and get up a cold dinner, and I'll go as a boarding-house! But if you think I'm going to any measly masquerade in bare legs like a baby, and bare-backed like a circus, just to advertise a hymn-book, a gin-mill and a broad-axe factory, you're left, Mrs. Spoopendyke. You hear me? You're left!" and Mr. Spoopendyke drew on his night-shirt.

"It's too awfully mean for anything," mused Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she laid away the Spanish guitar-girl's costume, and warmed up her crimping pins. "I tried to get something that would suit him, and he don't appear pleased with it. Another time I'll get him a sheet

and a pair of socks, so he can be a Roman senator, and if he is disappointed and tears 'em up it won't cost so much." With which profound reflection Mrs. Spoopendyke said her prayers, and planting her cold feet in Mr. Spoopendyke's stomach sank gently to rest.

XI.

HUNTING FOR A MARKET.

"I SAY, stranger, you wouldn't like to put a little money out at four hundred thousand per cent. interest, would you?" asked a seedy-looking customer, edging his way through a crowd of advertisers to the cashier's desk in the "Eagle" counting-room, yesterday.

"I don't know," replied the cashier, eying him suspiciously; "what have you got?"

"Got! What have I got? I've got the deepest, widest, straightest ledge in the Territory of Colorado."

"I'm not buying any mining stock," said the cashier, running up a column of figures.

"Right you ain't!" ejaculated the millionaire. "Leastways you ain't buying any stock in my mine, 'cause it ain't for sale. I would't part with half a share in that ledge for all the money a cooper could barrel in eight years. But I've got some quartz here that's going to make your eyes bile over when you see it. Be careful how you look, now. I seen seven men fairly blinded by this chunk o' wealth before nine o'clock this morning. Just throw your hand to your forehead so's to

kind o' shade your squints while I turn one end loose. See this, now." And he turned back the paper around a piece of limestone, and let it project slowly. "Are you gettin' accustomed to it, pardner? Think you dare take a wink at the whole racket? See the silver glisten all along here? That's the dirt I'm diggin', and I'm going to let you have this stuff economical. You can get this corner lot away from me for four hundred dollars. I was offered a thousand, but I've saved it for you, stranger, 'cause I knowed you was a deservin' young man."

"Where'd you find that dornick?" asked the cashier, contemptuously.

"Outen my ledge right in the Territory of Colorado. Ain't she a handsome piece of gilt? Look at them speckles, stranger; let your lashes rest on them speckles of future wealth and ambition gratified, and then reason to yourself that you're going to get it for four hundred dollars."

"Don't want it," responded the cashier carelessly, hunting through his figures for an error.

"She pans thirty-six thousand ounces to the ton, eighteen hundred dollars to the ounce. Would you please cal'late that for me in money, stranger? I have been figurin' so much that I lost all run of these small amounts."

"Sixty-four million eight hundred thousand dollars," replied the cashier.

"Jist so. And this yere quarter section of rollin' in luxury, what do you estimate its weight?"

"Six or eight pounds," said the cashier eying the rock.

"Never mind a pound or two, call it six," said the seedy man. "That's ninety-six ounces. That would make this lump of human happiness worth a hundred and fifty odd thousand. Gimme seventy-five dollars?"

"Oh! go throw it away!" said the cashier. "I don't want it at all."

"I'm tired carryin' it around," observed the seedy man. "I've got so much of this key to bliss that I don't mind partin' with it cheap. Say four dollars?"

"Get out, will you? I can't bother with you any more. I don't want your cobblestone at any price," ejaculated the exasperated cashier.

"Say, stranger," pleaded the seedy man after a moment's pause, "I want to step up street and pay the mortgage off the church my poor old step-mother goes to. Could you lock this round on the ladder to accomplished hopes in your vault till I come back? I won't be more'n an hour and a ——"

The next instant he rolled off the curbstone, with his piece of cheap pavement rattling round his head.

"I don't believe anybody'll interfere with it here," he sighed, as he brushed off his clothes and dropped the rock into the nose-bag of a truck horse. "I reckon it's safe. I say!" he continued, sticking his head into the counting-room door, and hailing the cashier again; "I say, pardner, you wouldn't mind keeping an eye on this horse for an hour and a half, while I step up to the church ——"

Then the deepening shadows of the gathering gloom absorbed him.

XII.

A SIMPLE TRICK AT CARDS.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he sat down opposite his wife and began to shuffle a pack of cards, "now I'm going to amuse you with a few tricks. I think a man ought to entertain his wife in the evening and be some society for her, and as I know a few simple tricks with cards I'll amuse you."

"I am so glad you are not like some other men," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, giving her chair a hitch; "you don't go out to clubs or sit around in bar-rooms all the evening. I always liked card tricks and I'm sure you can do them if anybody can."

Mr. Spoopendyke smiled and held the pack open like a fan for his wife to select.

"Let me see," said she, putting her fingers to her lips. "I am to pick out one, am I?"

"Yes," he responded eagerly, with the ace of spades sticking three-quarters of the way out toward her. "Pick out the easiest one to grab at and I'll show you a pretty trick."

Mrs. Spoopendyke ignored the tempting ace and selected one from the extreme end of the fan.

"Must I look at it?" she asked.

"Certainly," responded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Look at it and remember what it is."

She looked at it and studied it carefully.

"Now," continued Mr. Spoopendyke, "stick it back in the pack anywhere;" and he divided it and held it toward her.

"You mustn't know what it is, must you?" she asked.

"Of course not. You are to put it in the pack, and by and by I will tell you what it is."

Mrs. Spoopendkye jabbed it half way into the centre of one of the two sections as Mr. Spoopendyke held them.

"Strange you can't put it between 'em as you ought to," he growled. "A man would have fixed it an hour ago."

"It won't go in," pleaded Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she punched away at it. "I know what's the matter, why your little finger is right in the way. There," she continued, as she seized the pack and drove the card home, "now it's in. Now you can go on with your trick."

Of course Mr. Spoopendyke had lost all chance of finding out what the card was.

"Now, just draw another," he said, savagely, "and put it where I tell you to. I'm doing this trick, not you. All you've got to do is to draw and then let things alone."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Spoopendyke, somewhat disconcerted, "I didn't understand it. Now give me one."

She took it and slipped it into the pack, just where Mr. Spoopendyke wanted her to. Mr. Spoopendyke put the two sections together so that the selected card came on the bottom, and seeing that it was the seven of hearts, shuffled the cards briskly and then handed them to his wife.

"In order to show you that it is all fair," said he, in a cheerful tone, "you may shuffle them yourself, Mrs. Spoopendyke, shuffle as much as you like."

She slammed them around and spilled them for two or three minutes.

"You might leave something to designate them by," said Mr. Spoopendyke, eying the performance askance. "Never mind the edges or corners, but leave a chip or two of the middle so I will know that they are cards when you get through."

Mrs. Spoopendyke handed them over without further parley. Mr. Spoopendyke ran the cards over hastily, and selecting the seven of hearts, placed it on the top of the pack.

"Now, I will deal you some cards which you must watch," said he; and he dealt half a dozen, noting that the seven of hearts was on the bottom.

"Now, my dear, if your card is in that pack pick it out and hand me the rest."

She handed them back to him and running off all but the last three, he laid them in a pile in the middle of the table.

"Now take up one, but don't look at it," said Mr. Spoopendyke, with a smile.

She took it up and laid it one side.

"Now another," said he, grinning.

She repeated the operation.

"Now, Mrs. Spoopendyke, I'll trouble you to pick up that last card and turn it face up."

Mrs. Spoopendyke did so. It was the jack of clubs.

Mr. Spoopendyke gazed at her and at the card, while she sat waiting for the trick to go on.

"Was that your card?" he demanded.

"I don't think so," she answered, vaguely.

"Don't think so!" he thundered; "don't you know?"

"Yes. It wasn't my card, was it?" she answered, trembling a little.

"Yes. Was it?" he snarled. "Do you know what card you picked out, or don't you?"

"Why I took up those and then that one you told me to in the pack was the one I said you made ——"

"Mrs. Spoopendyke, what card did you select?" he asked, with awful sternness.

"Why, it was the other one, the ace of queens ——"

"You picked out the ace of queens!" with fearful sarcasm. "I'd like to know where you found it. You must have reached your arm in up to the shoulder to have got hold of it. I'll show you the card you picked out, Mrs. Spoopendyke; it was the seven of hearts;" and he scurried through the pack three or four times, but didn't find it. Finally, he looked over the table and caught her attentively examining something in her lap.

"What have you got there, eh?" he asked, suspiciously.

"Nothing, dear, but my card. You know you told me to pick it out and hand you back the balance ——"

Mr. Spoopendyke went straight to bed, with the remark that next season his wife would go to some well selected night school.

XIII.

HUNTING FOR A RECEIPT.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, "you need n't hurry, but you 'd better get ready pretty soon. Train don't go for an hour and a half, and we 'll have plenty of time to get there."

"I 'm all ready," chirped Mrs. Spoopendyke, bustling about. "It 's hot and we want to take plenty of time."

"Trunks all packed? Gripsacks? Basket? Everything packed?"

"Yes, indeed," tittered Mrs. Spoopendyke gleefully, "and I sent the trunk over by the expressman, so all you 've got to do is to check it at the station."

"That 's right," said Mr. Spoopendyke, kissing his wife. "That 's the way to do things. Did you nail a card on the trunk?"

"No, I" —

"You did n't! How 're we going to find it? Expect that trunk 's going to walk up and recognize us; think that trunk 's going to get up and make a speech and say it 's Spoopendyke's trunk?"

"The expressman said it did n't need any card. He gave me a receipt for it, and said that would do," smiled Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"I don't know but it will. I reckon he 's right about that. Where 's the receipt?" asked Mr. Spoopendyke, cheerily.

"Let 's see," rejoined Mrs. Spoopendyke, putting her finger to her lips, "I put it somewhere. Now, I wonder" —

"Take your thumb out of your mouth. You did n't stick it down your throat, did you? Don't you know where you put it?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke searched hurriedly through her pocket-book, and then locked in the bureau drawers.

"Don't be impatient, dear," she said, hunting behind the clock and rummaging in the vases. "I put it somewhere, I know."

"What sort of a thing was it, — a check? What did it look like?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke.

"It was n't a check. It was long and wide," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"So 's a cow. Did he give you a cow? Did it look like a cow? What d' ye do with it? Got it tied up in the yard?"

"It was a regular receipt on a piece of paper," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I had it when I commenced dressing. Now, what did I do with it?"

"What d' ye think you did with it? Hang it up on a nail? Did ye cook it? What ye standing there for? Why don't ye look for it? S'pose the gasted thing 's coming to you? Did it have legs? Was it on wheels?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke bustled around and searched again just where she had searched before.

"What d' ye want to look there for? Why don't you stop and try to think what you did with it? Ain't you got any sense at all, scarcely?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "S'pose the measly thing crawled into the clock? Got any idea that it climbed over the side of two vases

and hid itself in both? Why don't you put things where you can find them?"

"I generally do," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Oh! yes, you do. You always do, don't you? When business gets dull I'm going to fill you up with little boxes and start a safe deposit with you. Have n't you found it yet? How 'm I going to get at that trunk without a receipt? S'pose that dod-gasted railroad 's going to wait around like a fly on a doughnut while I swear to which is my trunk? Think that 's the only trunk they 've got over there? Here, you sit down here and let me look for that thing. You won't find it any more 'n a heathen would find consolation in the Thirty-nine Articles. Sit down there while I take the house to pieces, ye hear me!"

Mr. Spoopendyke jumped up and tore around like a green apple in a Sunday-school stomach.

"Look here," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, pointing to the chair her husband had vacated. "There it is now. You 've been sitting on it."

XIV.

SOME DIFFICULTY ABOUT A DOG.

"Look here, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he led a huge and shaggy dog into his wife's room, "I 've got a dog a friend of mine gave me. What do you think of him?"

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mrs. Spoopendyke, mounting a chair in dismay. "Is he mad?"

"No, Mrs. Spoopendyke," retorted her husband, "he not only is n't mad, but he is n't a step-ladder either, nor a bird's-eye view. He 's a dog, and if you don't get out of that chair he 'll probably bite your legs off."

Mrs. Spoopendyke sat down on her feet and eyed the brute with some trepidation.

"Maybe he 's got the hydrophobia," she suggested by way of a hearty welcome.

"P'r'aps he has," agreed Mr. Spoopendyke, "but if he has he 's got it in his pocket. Come here, doggee, doggee, doggee!" and Mr. Spoopendyke snapped his fingers persuasively.

"Why don't he come when you call him?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, deeply interested in the proceedings.

"Because you make such a dod-gasted noise you scare him," explained Mr. Spoopendyke. "Come, doggee, doggee!"

"I don't quite like the way his tongue hangs out," objected Mrs. Spoopendyke. "It don't look natural."

"Maybe you don't like the way his tail hangs out, either. P'r'aps you think that 's artificial, too. With your information about dogs you only need a slat bottom and a broken hinge to be a dog pound. Keep quiet now, while I teach him some tricks. Come here, doggee! Sit up, sir!"

The dog stretched out his fore legs, opened a mouth like a folding bedstead and growled.

"What makes him do that?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, sitting on the back of the chair with her feet in the seat.

"God! dod gast it!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke.

"Who do you s'pose made him do it? Think he works with a wire? Got a notion he goes by steam? He don't. I tell ye, he's alive, and he does it because that's the bent of his measly mind. What are ye sitting up there for? Can't ye see he don't like it? Now, you sit still. Here doggee, doggee, good doggee, sit up and beg!" and Mr. Spoopendyke held up an admonitory finger.

The dog eyed Mr. Spoopendyke with anything but an assuring glance.

"He's hungry," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Dogs do like that when they want to be taken down in the yard and fed."

"Of course you know," grumbled Mr. Spoopendyke. "All you want is perfect ignorance on the part of the police to be a dog fight. Got anything in the house for him to eat?"

"There's some cold oyster stew and a piece of custard pie —"

"That's it!" raved Mr. Spoopendyke. "That's what's the matter with the dog. He wants pie! You've got it. You only need a committee and a fight over the proceeds to be a bench show. Where's the oysters? Don't you see that dog pining for oysters? Have n't ye got some cold coffee for him? Give him a lemon to stay his stomach!" and Mr. Spoopendyke jumped straight up in the air and landed on the dog.

The dog made for the open air with a howl, and Mr. Spoopendyke gathered up twelve baskets of himself and looked after his prize.

"Never mind, dear," said Mrs. Spoopendyke soothingly, "he'll come back."

"If he does I 'll kill him," shouted Mr. Spoopendyke. "See what you 've done! You have made me lose my dog and torn my trousers. Anything more about dogs you don't know? Got any more intelligence to impart about dogs? All you want is a bucket of brandy around your neck and a snow-storm to be a monk of St. Bernard." With which logical conclusion Mr. Spoopendyke began exploring his outlying districts for possible bites, while his wife speculated upon the salvation of the cold oysters and the custard pie by the sudden and eminently satisfactory disaffection of the dog.

XV.

THE FIRST SERMON.

THERE were murmurings in Bismarck,
When the dealer of a bank
Announced that Parson Miller
Had brought his gospel tank.

And the mutterings grew louder,
When a sign made it appear
That, "Instead of faro, Sunday,
There 'll be Bible banging here!"

For the good folk of Dakota
Had peculiar notions of
The uses of the Sabbath,
And the doctrines of God's love;

And they held it an infraction
Of their rights, when some one came
To bust their calculations, and
Break up the Sunday game.

They had a simple kind of faith
That God looked after him,
Who had the biggest stack of chips,
And may have had a grim,

Peculiar notion that there was
Some power above them all,
That helped protect the honest man
Who failed to make a haul.

Still, whether it was worth while
For some one to come in
Asking special intervention
For those who could n't win,

Seemed to somewhat tear the town up,
And opinions differed wide,
Till Mr. Dennis Hannafin
Went on the Parson's side.

And then the aspect altered,
And the citizens agreed
That he who raised objection
Should be taken out and treed.

The Sunday came, as Sundays will,
Though men be good or bad,
And never congregation was
Like that the Parson had.

The faro-table did the task
Of pulpit. Each man sat
Provided well with chips against
The passing of the hat.

For they felt they owed a duty
To the place, as well as God,
So they patronized the banker,
Ere they passed beneath the rod.

There may be better sermons
Than the trembling Parson brought,
Far more replete with poetry
And gleaming gems of thought;

But the honest man did nobly,
Though he played the hand alone,
For he preached some good religion,
And — the sermon was his own.

He told them of a coming time
When chips must be passed in,
And begged them that they play so they
Stood solidly to win.

He told them of that fearful game
Of agony and doubt,
In which God's foes chipped in the world
And Jesus raised them out.

And the congregation listened,
With spirits somewhat dashed,
As he pointed out the higher Bank
Where human souls are cashed.

Finally he closed and said
  He had a little whim:
He wanted them to sing, and more
  Than that, select the hymn.

It is a solemn rule among
  The people of that band,
Whatever game may be proposed
  To always take a hand.

So they braced up for the struggle,
  Though it was a novel thing,
And after consultation,
  They started in to sing.

Perhaps no church collection
  Contains the hymn they sang,
For they only knew "Whoa, Emma!"
  And the very bottles rang.

But there was a tone of earnestness
  Of feeling in the roar,
That very few set songs of praise
  Had ever known before.

And the Parson understood it,
  And had but little care,
For he heard a something rising
  Above the words and air.

And when a sheepish gentleman
  Betook him to explain,
The Parson turned him down, and asked
  To hear the hymn again.

And once again "Whoa, Emma!" raised
The lid from off the stove,
And echoed from the bottles to
The Golden Bar above.

Which occasioned Mr. Hannafin
To hazard the remark,
That if angels liked good music,
To cheese their own, and hark.

And then the Parson's battered hat
Was passed among those wrecks,
And silently the poorest even,
Anteed up their checks.

The Parson, all bewildered, asked
What he should do with those,
And learned that he might play 'em in,
Or cash 'm as he chose.

And Mr. Hannafin agreed,
In case they were played in,
To take the look-out chair himself,
And double-bank a skin;

While if the Parson wanted cash,
Why, waltz right up and plank;
For chips for cash and cash for chips,
Was how he ran that bank.

That was the first religion
Ever preached in Bismarck town;
And now three goodly churches
That early effort crown.

And each faro-table has a slit,
In which each man has got
To drop a part of what he wins,
Which slit is called "God's Pot."

And though, perhaps, religion
Don't make a heavy pull
Upon the lives of those who play,
The "Pot" is always full.

And possibly, some future day,
When checks are all cashed in,
The men who built those churches
Will find they stand to win.

XVI.

TEMPORARILY MISLAID.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, cheerfully, "be lively. It's twenty minutes past ten, and we must n't be late at church. Most ready?"

"Yes, dear," beamed Mrs. Spoopendyke, "I'm all ready. Got everything?"

"I think so. Hymn book, umbrella, and — where's the prayer book? I have n't got the prayer book."

"Where did you leave it?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, turning over the volumes on the table hurriedly.

"If I knew where I left it, I 'd strut right to that spot and get it," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "I left it with

you. Where did you put it? Can't you remember what you do with things?"

"I have n't seen it since last Sunday," returned Mrs. Spoopendyke, faintly. "I know," she continued, "perhaps it is at church."

"Perhaps it is," mimicked Mr. Spoopendyke, "perhaps it got up early, took a bath and went ahead of us. Did you ever see a prayer book prowl off to church all alone? Ever see a prayer book h'ist up its skirts and strike out for the sanctuary without an escort? S'pose a prayer book knows the difference between a church and a ham sandwich? Where did you put it?"

"I mean, you may have left it in the pew rack. You know you did once," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"I did n't anything of the sort. I brought it home and gave it to you. Where do you keep it? What did you do with it? S'pose I'm going to swash around through that service without knowing whether they are doing the Apostles' Creed or an Act of Congress? Spring around and find it, can't you? What are you looking there for? Don't you know the difference between a prayer book and the Wandering Jew? Find it, can't you?"

"Never mind it, dear," fluttered Mrs. Spoopendyke, "I know all the responses, and I 'll help you along."

"Oh, yes, you know 'em all. What you don't know about religion would n't wad a gun. All you want is a bell and a board fence to be a theological seminary. Think you can find that prayer book between now and the equinoctial?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "Got any idea whether you sold the measly thing for china vases or stirred it into the wheat cakes? Have I been chew-

ing divine grace all the morning? Where 's that prayer book? Going to get that prayer book before the Revelations come to pass?" And Mr. Spoopendyke plunged around the room, tumbling books about and breathing heavily.

"I don't see the use of making such a fuss over a thing you don't really need," sobbed Mrs. Spoopendyke through her indignant tears.

"Oh, you don't," raved Mr. Spoopendyke. "You don't see any use in putting things where they belong, either, do you? How d' ye s'pose I 'm going to keep up with religion without a prayer book? How d' ye s'pose I'm going to know when it 's my turn to show what Christianity has done for me unless you can find that dod-gasted book between now and the resurrection?" And Mr. Spoopendyke spun around on his heel like a top, and knocked over a Parian jar.

"Wait a minute, my dear," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, looking at him earnestly. Then she went behind him and fished out the prayer book.

"Got it, did n't you," he growled. "Had it all the time, I s'pose. Where was it any way?"

"In your coat-tail pocket, dear." And Mrs. Spoopendyke jabbed the powder puff in her eyes, and stalked down stairs, leaving her liege to follow.

XVII.

SOME ITEMS ABOUT SNAKES.

"Do you want some items about snakes?" asked an agricultural-looking gentleman of the *Eagle's* city editor the other day.

"If they are fresh and true," responded the city editor.

"Exactly," replied the farmer. "These items are both. Nobody knows 'em but me. I got a farm down on the Island a piece, and there 's lots of snakes on to it. Near the house is a pond about six feet deep. A week ago my little girl jumped into the pond, and would have drowned if it had 'nt been for a snake. The snake seen her, and went for her, and brought her ashore. The particular point about this item is the way he did it."

"How was it?" asked the city editor.

"It was a black snake, about thirty feet long, and he just coiled the middle of himself around her neck so she could n't swallow any water, and swum ashore with his head and tail. Is that a good item?"

"First class."

"You can spread it out, you know. After they got ashore the girl patted the snake on the head, and it went off pleased as Punch. Ever since then he comes to the house regular at meal times, and she feeds him on pie. He likes pie. Think you can make anything out of that item?"

"Certainly. Know any more?"

"Yes. I got a baby six months old. He's a boy. We generally set him out on the grass of a morning, and he hollers like a bull all day, at least he used to, but he don't any more. One morning we noticed he was n't hollering, and wondered what was up. When we looked, there was a rattlesnake coiled up in front of him, scanning his features. The boy was grinning, and the snake was grinning. Bimeby the snake turned his tail to the baby, and backed his rattle right into the baby's fist."

"What did the baby do?"

"Why he just rattled that tail so you could hear it three quarters of a mile, and the snake lay there and grinned. Every morning we found the snake there, until one day a bigger snake came, and the baby played with his rattle just the same till the first snake came back. He looked thin, and I reckon he had been sick and sent the other snake to take his place. Will that do for an item?"

"Immensely," replied the city editor.

"You can fill in about the confidence of childhood, and all that, and you might say something about the blue-eyed cherub. His name is Isaac. Put that in to please my wife."

"I'll do it. Any more snake items?"

"Lemme see. You 've heard of hoop snakes!"

"Yes, often."

"Just so. Not long ago we heard a fearful row in our cellar one night. It sounded like a rock blast, and then there was a hiss and then things was quiet. When I looked in the morning I found the cider barrel had busted. But we did n't lose much cider."

"How did you save it?"

"It seems that the staves had busted out, but before they could get away, four hoop snakes coiled around the barrel and tightened it up and held it together until we drew the cider off in bottles. That's the way we found 'em, and we've kept them around the house ever since. We're training 'em for shawl straps now. Does that strike you favorably for an item?"

"Enormously," responded the city editor.

"You can fix it up so as to show how quick they was to get there before the staves were blown off. You can work in the details."

"Of course. I'll attend to all that. Do you think of any more?"

"Ain't you got enough? Lemme think. Oh, yes! One Sunday me and my wife was going to church, and she dropped her garter somewhere. She told me about it and I noticed a little striped snake running alongside and listening to her. Bimeby he made a spring and just wound himself around her stocking, or tried to, but he did n't fetch it."

"Why not?"

"He was n't quite long enough. He jumped down and shook his head and started off. We had n't gone more 'n a quarter of a mile when we see him coming out of the woods just ahead of us. He was awful hot and tired, and he had another snake with him, twice as big as he was. They looked at my wife a minute and said something to each other, and then the big snake went right to the place where the garter belonged. He wrapped right around it, put his tail in his mouth, and went to sleep. We got him yet. We use him to hold

the stovepipe together when we put the stove up. Is that any use as an item?"

"Certainly," said the city editor.

"You can say something about the first snake's eyes for distances, and his intellectuality, when he found he would n't go round. You know how to do that better than me."

"I'll give him all the credit he deserves. Can you tell us any more?"

"I don't call any to mind just at present. My wife knows a lot of snake items, but I forget 'em. By the way, though, I 've got a regular living curiosity down on my place. One day my oldest boy was sitting on the back stoop doing his sums, and he could 'nt get 'em right. He felt something against his face, and there was a little snake coiled up on his shoulder and looking at the slate. In four minutes he had done all them sums. We 've tamed him, so he keeps all our accounts, and he is the lightningest cuss at figures you ever seen. He 'll run up a column eight feet long in three seconds. I would n't take a reaper for him."

"What kind of a snake is he?" inquired the city editor, curiously.

"The neighbors call him an adder."

"Oh, yes, yes!" said the city editor, a little disconcerted. "I've heard of the species. When did all these things happen?"

"Along in the fore part of the spring, but I did n't say anything about 'em, 'cause it was n't the season for snake items. This is about time for that sort of thing, is n't it?"

"Yes," chipped in the exchange editor, "you could n't have picked out a better time for snake stories."

XVIII.

A FRIENDLY GAME OF CHECKERS.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he drew on his slippers and settled himself for the evening, "if you will get the checker-board, I'll play you a game — you're learning so rapidly that it's really a pleasure to try quits with you."

Mrs. Spoopendyke giggled with delight, kissed her husband on the top of the head, and fluttered away to find the board and checkers.

"Which shall I take, the white or the red men?" she asked, as she plumped down in a rocker about a foot and a half lower than his easy-chair, and arranged the apparatus at an angle of fifty degrees.

"I think you misapprehend my suggestion," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "I didn't propose to go sliding down hill at this season. My idea was a game of checkers, and if you think those men are going to stand around on a board tipped up on one end, and wait to be moved, you're not thoroughly acquainted with their habits. There, can't you hold it like that?" and Mr. Spoopendyke jerked his wife's side of the board up to her chin and began arranging the white checkers on his rows.

"Maybe I'd better put a book under it," recommended Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Or if you could lower your knees a little, it would come even."

"Very likely," replied Mr. Spoopendyke, "but my knees were n't constructed with especial regard to checkers. They were put where they are and fastened, and they won't run up and down like a flag. If you can't hold up your side of the board we won't play."

"Oh, yes; certainly," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Let 's see, is it your move, or mine?" And she jabbed a man right across the line out of the lower square of the double corner and gave the board a hitch to rest her arm.

"What are you trying to play?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Think this is a game of base-ball? Don't you know you 've got to move cattecornered? 'T ain't your move, anyway. Put that back. There. Now I 'll move there."

"Oh! I know you 're going to jump me, you always do," squealed Mrs. Spoopendyke, picking up the checker she had moved before and putting it in her mouth while she studied the prospect. "If I put it here you 'll"—

"Swallow it, why don't ye? If ye don't want it jumped, why don't ye swallow it?" interrogated Mr. Spoopendyke. "Can't ye leave the measly thing alone till ye get ready to move? Put it down, I tell ye."

Mrs. Spoopendyke restored it to its square and kept her thumb on it so as not to lose her move.

"If I put it there, can you jump?" she asked, wiggling it around and finally drawing her hand away in jerks as if afraid to leave it.

"Just watch and see," grinned Mr. Spoopendyke, as he popped a man over it and gathered it in.

"Now I 'll move here," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I don't know, though. Perhaps I 'd better move here." And she chased a man over half a dozen squares.

"Going to move in 'em all?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Think that man 's triplets and goes in six places at once? Move it there. Now, let me see. Let me see." And Mr. Spoopendyke began to whistle.

Mrs. Spoopendyke glanced around to see that the pillow shams had not slid off, and then up at the curtains to see if they hung right, and then she turned to the board again and shoved a man into another square.

"What ye doing?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "'Tain't your move! I ain 't moved yet. Going to play this thing all alone? Put him back and wait till I move."

Mrs. Spoopendyke put it back with a sigh, and raised the board a little to get a rest for her elbow on her knee.

"Hold it still, can't ye!" scowled Mr. Spoopendyke. "What d' ye think this thing is, any way, a washboard? Well, it ain't, and it ain't a water pitcher, either. It 's a checker-box and wants to be held level. Now I 'll move here," he continued, not noticing that he left his king row open.

"Then do I jump these two men and get a king?" inquired Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Of course I do. Crown me. I 've got the first king." And Mrs. Spoopendyke chuckled hysterically.

"No you ain't, either. I did n't mean that move. If you can't play checkers without cackling like a hen you 'd better give it up. I 'll take that back and move here; now, so. Now you can move."

"Over here?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Certainly. That 's very good." And her husband gobbled two men.

"I did n't see that, I 'd rather put it here," she remonstrated.

"Too late now," said Mr. Spoopendyke, pegging away for the king row. "You should study your moves first."

"If I jump here I get another king," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, plunging through an unguarded space.

"What d' ye want to tumble 'em all over for?" shrieked Mr. Spoopendyke. "Ain't ye got any sense, scarcely? You make more fuss over a measly king than most women over a baby. Where you jumping to? Dod gast it, don't ye know it 's my move? Gimme back them men. What are you putting them there for? Can't ye hold up that board straight? What ails ye? Here, this one goes there."

"No, it don't," reasoned Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I know"—

"Oh! of course you know. You got it all. All you want is a pair of hinges and speckled sides to be a checker-box. If I ever want to beat some good player I'll put a washtub on your head and move you around for a king. Where 's my men?"

"I think they slid off," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, screwing herself around to look under her chair, and thereby losing the rest of the checkers.

"Satisfied? Are ye satisfied?" raved Mr. Spoopendyke, kicking the board under the table. "Got what ye wanted?" and he danced around on the checkers. "Can't even play a game of checkers without making a dod-gasted fuss about it, can ye? I beat ye, anyway." And Mr. Spoopendyke plunged into bed.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Spoopendyke to herself, as she took down her back hair, "I got a king and he did n't quite wash me, as he calls it, anyhow."

XIX.

IN SEARCH OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

"WHAT I want to see," said a Denver man, as he alighted from the train at Manhattan Beach, Friday afternoon, — "what I want to see is some of your boasted civilization. I ain't much on the swell myself, but I want to see some top-shelf society. That's what I want. Now, just parade your Astors and your Vanderbilts and your Jay Goulds and your Knickerbockers and the other ancients right before my presence. Don't be any way skeered of me. These clothes only cost fifteen dollars, and I'm no way stuck up. I want to see some tone. Cut me a thick slice of high life. I come a long piece to see the fashionables, and if they're in condition just pull off the blankets and trot 'em forward."

"Is there anything I can do for you?" asked the manager, courteously, noticing the crowd gathering.

"Right you can, stranger. I come more 'n a bushel of miles to see this climate, and I want the attractions spread so I can examine the lay-out. I can throw some money myself, but what I want to see is style. Tell 'em not to hide on my account. Just walk some of the dignitaries up and down before me a couple of times. I want to see their points. Fetch me out a couple of well-matched high steppers and give 'em their heads."

"All the people you see around you, sir, are first-class

people. They move in our highest circles and belong to the aristocracy," explained the manager.

"Are you giving it to me straight, partner? All these fellows way-ups? Who's the philosopher with his breeches tucked in his socks?"

"That is a Yale young gentleman, home on a vacation."

"I don't want that kind. Show me a high daddy, one of 'em that gets their name in the papers for going to whooping weddings and is called the elight. Pick me out some Astors. That's the trout I'm throwing for."

"I don't think any of Mr. Astor's family are here to-day. That stout gentleman, with side whiskers, belongs to one of the first families in New York. He is a very popular young man, and leads in the Germans."

"Ain't big enough. Haven't you got a couple of head of Vanderbilts, or a Jay Gould or so anywheres? You see, stranger, I've read about those fellows, and I'd like to greet 'em with cordiality. What I want is to wobble fins with the satin lined. That Yale man and the boss leg slinger in the Dutch fandango ain't new. We see them home when they string for tourists. I'm on to them, but what I want is the balloons, the soarers. Throw your pickaxe, stranger, and see if the wash don't pan better dirt. Strikes me your rock don't assay pretty well this evening. Where's the mob?"

"These are the best people I know of to-day," said the manager in despair. "Mr. Vanderbilt is not here, nor is Mr. Gould."

"Ain't you got any Knickerbockers on draught? Don't you keep the best article in stock? You 'd make out to starve in Denver, if you was n't interfered with,

partner. When a man throws himself for a hoteller in those parts, he keeps the high-toned population right out in front and shored up behind. You don't seem to have much experience in running a beef-a-la-mode ranche. Just begun, have n't you? If I was in your place I 'd have them Goulds and Knickerbockers and Vanderbilts and Astors ranged right along the front edge of that back stoop spitting at a chip for drinks, and the fust one that broke gravel would pay his bar bill or go home bareheaded; now, you hear me. What you want, stranger, is enterprise. All you 've got is a shed and some water, and if your liquor ain't any better 'n your judgment, I 'm going back dry."

"You will find everything first-class here, I think," argued the manager. "We aim" —

"Just so, chief, but you don't hit. You aim too low. You 've got room here to hold the biggest bug that ever straddled a blind, but there is n't a card out higher 'n an eight spot. I reckon you play pool without the fifteen."

"Would you like to try something?" asked the manager, anxious to disperse the grinning crowd.

"You might fetch me and these gentlemen a little tan-bark, if it 's good. I don't want any stock where the shareholders are responsible for the debts, but if you 've got some liquid symphony in Q major, I 'll wrap up a cartridge with you, stranger."

"Join me in the bar-room," said the manager, nervously.

"Good stake off for a junction. Gentlemen, me and the engineer are going for the doxology. Will you jine us?"

They "jined," and the manager ordered refreshment and left, despite the entreaties of the gentleman from Denver that he would "introduce him to the ladies, such as they were, and he would forego the top tifters until he (the manager) had run along the vein to the prospect of a paying clean-up."

XX.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF A WITNESS.

"You must get around pretty early in the morning, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, "because I 'm going to be a witness in court."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mrs. Spoopendyke, "what have you been doing?"

"What d' ye s'pose I've been doing? I've heard some things in a law case, and I've got to swear to them. You can't have a law case without witnesses, and I've got to be one to-morrow; so you hustle out in the morning and get my breakfast."

"They can't do anything to you, can they?" inquired Mrs. Spoopendyke, nervously.

"If I ain't there in time they can send me to jail," responded Mr. Spoopendyke, ominously, "and you 'd better get me ready in time if you don't want to lose me." And Mr. Spoopendyke flopped into bed and went to sleep.

Mrs. Spoopendyke turned the clock ahead two hours, arranged her hair, and sat down to speculate on the

chances of waking up at the proper moment. At first she concluded to stay up all night, but she began to get sleepy, and reflecting that if she fixed her mind on the hour she wanted to rise she'd be sure to wake up, she went to bed and to sleep simultaneously.

At half past four she roused up with a terrified start.

"Wake up, my dear!" she exclaimed, to her husband. "You've got to go a witnessing in a case this morning. Hurry up, or they'll put you in jail."

"Wah!" rejoined Mr. Spoopendyke. "What did the heed get mixed there with — poof — ah!" And Mr. Spoopendyke was sound asleep again.

"You must get right up and go to court," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, firmly. "You know something about a law court and you must wake up right off."

"What's the matter?" propounded Mr. Spoopendyke, sitting up and glaring around him. "What day of the month is this? Who called Spoopendyke? I ain't slept a wink." And Mr. Spoopendyke fell back on his pillow.

"You know you must go to the case," continued Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You've been appointed a witness and you must go and swear about it. Wake up, or they will arrest you."

"What case?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Who's arrested? Can't you let a man alone just as he is getting in a doze? What's the matter with you, anyway?"

"You wanted to get up early about some court. Come, get up, now, or they'll send you to jail." And Mrs. Spoopendyke got up and lighted the gas, and began dropping on her skirts.

"Who's going to court?" asked Mr. Spoopendyke, sitting up in bed. "Where's the court? Think any court wants me at five o'clock in the morning?"

"It's about a law case," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, cheerfully. "You know you are a witness. To think that I should live to be the wife of a witness!" And Mrs. Spoopendyke, firmly impressed that it was something in the nature of a foreign mission, gazed admiringly upon her husband.

"Dod gast the law case!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke, now thoroughly mad. "D'ye think a law case goes prowling around all night like a policeman? Got an idea that a judge is going to strap the court house on his back and fetch it up here at daylight to try a law case?"

"But you said you wanted to get up early," reasoned Mrs. Spoopendyke, "and its pretty early now."

"D'ye s'pose I wanted to get up at midnight to practise?" propounded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Think a law case is like a church sociable, the first man there gets the best supper? P'r'aps you were afraid if I did n't start early I would n't get a seat. The measly court don't meet till ten o'clock, dod gast it; and here you wake me up at four! What d'ye s'pose a witness is, anyhow?" shouted Mr. Spoopendyke, getting madder and madder. "Think he's a dark lantern, and goes around with his slide turned and the smoke coming out of the top? D'ye know what a court is?"

"Why, yes," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, "a court is a place where they hang people. Mrs. Meierhof" —

"That's it! You struck it, first clip!" sputtered Mr. Spoopendyke. "With that information, all you

want is a plug hat and an adjournment to be a lawyer. If I had your intelligence and a bald head, I'd hire out for a judge at board wages. I tell ye, a court is where they try cases about lands and licking people and contracts and — and — and divorce cases. Yes, indeed," continued Mr. Spoopendyke, solemnly, "they try divorce cases about women waking their husbands up in the dead of night."

"What kind of a law case are you going to witness?" inquired Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"A daylight case! You understand that? At ten o'clock, and not five. Get that through your head? Think you can remember ten o'clock? If you can't, can you remember eleven, or noon?"

"Do they have cases every hour?" queried Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Of course they do. They leave every fifteen minutes, like a ferry-boat, and if I can't catch one case, I'll witness in another. Got it now? Only they don't run as often from midnight to six. Begin to see into it?"

"I think I do," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, ruminating. "I was thinking that if one started about three o'clock, I'd go and witness with you."

"Oh, you'd make a witness!" proclaimed Mr. Spoopendyke. "With your capacity for observation and ability to recollect, you'd only want to appear twice to absorb the whole witness business." And with this reflection, Mr. Spoopendyke went back to his slumbers.

At ten o'clock sharp his wife called him and notified him of the hour.

"How'm I going to get there in time?" he howled. "Why didn't you call me before? Want me sent to

State prison for contempt? Want to get rid of me, don't you?" And Mr. Spoopendyke darted into his clothes.

"Don't you want some breakfast, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Spoopendyke, tenderly.

"No, I don't want any measly breakfast!" he shouted. "Didn't I tell ye I was a witness at ten, and now it's half past? Think a man is appointed a witness during good behavior? S'pose I hold the office till my successor is appointed?" And Mr. Spoopendyke plunged down stairs and out of the house.

"I only did what he told me to," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke, wetting a piece of court plaster and patching up a hole in her silk dress. "Though I don't see any use of a man being a witness if he can't be a witness when he wants to. If I were a man," she continued, as she flopped down on the floor to change her boots, "I'd get appointed by the President, and then I could attend to business or not, as I liked." With which sage reflection Mrs. Spoopendyke pulled out her husband's socks and began to sew wens three inches in diameter on the heels.

XXI.

THE LOST SHIRT STUD.

"My dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, feeling up the chimney, "have you seen my gold collar button?"

"I saw it the day you bought it," answered Mrs. Spoopendyke, cheerily, "and I thought it very pretty. Why do you ask?"

"'Cause I've lost the measly thing," responded Mr. Spoopendyke, running the broom handle up into the cornice and shaking it as if it were a carpet.

"You don't suppose it's up there, do you?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Where did you leave it?"

"Left it in my shirt. Where do you suppose I'd leave it; in the hash?" And Mr. Spoopendyke tossed over the things in his wife's writing-desk and looked out of the window after it.

"Where did you leave your shirt?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Where did I leave my shirt? Where do you suppose I left it? Where does a man generally leave his shirt, Mrs. Spoopendyke? Think I left it in the ferry-boat? Got an idea I left it at prayer meeting, have n't you? Well, I did n't. I left it off, Mrs. Spoopendyke, there's where I left it. I left it off. Hear me?" And Mr. Spoopendyke pulled the winter clothing out of the cedar chest that had n't been unlocked for a month.

"Where's the shirt now?" persisted Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Where do you suppose it is? Where do you imagine it is? I'll tell you where it is, Mrs. Spoopendyke, it's gone to Bridgeport as a witness in a land suit. Idea! Ask a man where his shirt is! You know I haven't been out of the room since I came home last night and took it off." And Mr. Spoopendyke sailed down stairs and raked the fire out of the kitchen range, but didn't find the button.

"Maybe you lost it on the way home," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke, as her husband came up, hot and angry, and began to pull a stuffed canary to pieces to see if the button had got inside.

"Oh, yes! Very likely! I stood up against a tree and lost it. Then I hid behind a fence so I wouldn't see it. That's the way it was. If I only had your head, Mrs. Spoopendyke, I'd turn loose as a razor-strop. I don't know anything sharper than you are." And Mr. Spoopendyke got up in a chair and clutched a handful of dust off the top of the wardrobe.

"It must have fallen out," mused Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Oh, it must, eh! It must have fallen out! Well, I declare, I never thought of that. My impression was that it took a buggy and drove out, or a balloon and hoisted out." And Mr. Spoopendyke crawled behind the bureau and commenced tearing up the carpet.

"And if it fell out, it must be somewhere near where he left his shirt. Now he always throws his shirt on the lounge, and the button is under that."

A moment's search established the infallibility of Mrs. Spoopendyke's logic.

"Oh, yes! Found it, did n't you?" panted Mr. Spoopendyke, as he bumped his head against the bureau and finally climbed to a perpendicular. "Perhaps you 'll fix my shirts so it won't fall out any more, and maybe you 'll have sense enough to mend that lounge, now it has made so much trouble. If you only 'tended to the house as I do to my business, there 'd never be any difficulty about losing a collar button."

"It was n't my fault — " began Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Was n't, eh! Have you found that coal bill you 've been looking for since March?"

"Yes."

"Have, eh! Now, where did you put it! Where did you find it?"

"In your overcoat pocket."

XXII.

A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLANATION.

A FEW days ago a Boston girl, who had been attending the School of Philosophy at Concord, arrived in Brooklyn on a visit to a seminary chum. After canvassing thoroughly the fun and gum-drops that made up their education in the seat of learning at which their early scholastic efforts were made, the Brooklyn girl began to inquire into the nature of the Concord entertainment.

"And so you are taking lessons in philosophy. How do you like it?"

"Oh, it's perfectly lovely! It's about science you know, and we all just dote on science."

"It must be nice. What is it about?"

"It's about molecules as much as anything else, and molecules are just too awfully nice for anything. If there's anything I really enjoy, it's molecules."

"Tell me about them, my dear. What are molecules?"

"Oh, molecules! They are little wee things, and it takes ever so many of them. They are splendid things! Do you know, there ain't anything but what's got molecules in it. And Mr. Cook is just as sweet as he can be, and Mr. Emerson too. They explain everything so beautifully."

"How I'd like to go there!" said the Brooklyn girl, enviously.

"You'd enjoy it ever so much. They teach protoplasm too, and if there is one thing perfectly heavenly it's protoplasm. I really don't know which I like best, protoplasm or molecules."

"Tell me about protoplasm. I know I should adore it."

"'Deed you would. It's just too sweet to live. You know it's about how things get started, or something of that kind. You ought to hear Mr. Emerson tell about it. It would stir your very soul. The first time he explained about protoplasm there was n't a dry eye in the house. We named our hats after him. This is an Emerson hat. You see the ribbon is drawn over the crown and caught with a buckle and a bunch of flowers. Then you turn up the side with a spray of forget-me-nots. Ain't it just too sweet? All the girls in the school have them."

"How exquisitely lovely! Tell me some more science."

"Oh! I almost forgot about differentiation. I am really and truly in love with differentiation. It's different from molecules and protoplasms, but it's every bit as nice. And Mr. Cook! You should hear him go on about it! I really believe he's perfectly bound up in it. This scarf is the Cook scarf. All the girls wear them, and we named them after him just on account of the interest he takes in differentiation."

"What is it, anyway?"

"This is mull trimmed with Languedoc lace" —

"I don't mean that — that other."

"Oh, differentiation! ain't it sweet? It's got something to do with species. It's the way you tell one hat from another, so you'll know which is becoming. And we learn all about ascidians, too. They are the divinest things! I'm absolutely enraptured with ascidians. If I had only an ascidian of my own, I would n't ask anything else in the world."

"What do they look like, dear? Did you ever see one?" asked the Brooklyn girl, deeply interested.

"Oh, no; nobody ever saw one except Mr. Cook and Mr. Emerson, but they are something like an oyster with a reticule hung on its belt. I think they are just heavenly."

"Do you learn anything else besides all these?"

"Oh, yes. We learn about philosophy and logic and those common things like metaphysics, but the girls don't care anything about those. We are just in ecstasies over differentiation and molecules, and Mr. Cook and protoplasms, and ascidians and Mr. Emerson, and

I really don't see why they put in those vulgar branches. If anybody beside Mr. Cook and Mr. Emerson had done it, we should have told him to his face that he was too terribly, too awfully mean."

And the Brooklyn girl went to bed that night in the dumps, because fortune had not vouchsafed her the advantages enjoyed by her friend, while the Boston girl dreamed of seeing an ascidian chasing a molecule over a differentiated back fence with a club for telling a protoplasm that his youngest sister had so many freckles on her nose that they made her cockeyed.

XXIII.

IN THE SURF.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he stepped out of his bathing house, and thumped on the door of the one occupied by Mrs. Spoopendyke, "are you ready? We must hurry into the water and out again or we won't get through in time for dinner."

Mrs. Spoopendyke emerged, bent almost double and shivering with the cold.

"Is n't it rather chilly?" she asked.

"Not at all, Mrs. Spoopendyke, not at all; the air is rather cool, but the water is warm. If you are going with me you want to move along."

As they reached the beach, Mr. Spoopendyke left his wife and boldly strode into the surf. A wave broke

over him, filling his eyes, nose, ears, and mouth, and then he strode out.

"What 're ye standing there for, eh?" he demanded. "What do ye take yourself for; a lighthouse? Did ye come down here to take a bath, or are ye waiting for some ship to tie up to you? What 's the matter with you, anyway?"

"I 'm afraid of the waves," whimpered Mrs. Spoopendyke, "they 's so big."

"Oh, they 're too big for you, ain't they?" retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "Wait till I get a man to saw off a little one. Better get measured for one to suit, had n't you? It 's the big waves you want, I tell you. Look here!" And Mr. Spoopendyke marched boldly into the sea again. He turned his face toward the shore and beckoned to his wife. Another wave caught him and landed him high and dripping on the beach.

"Why did n't ye come when I called ye? What d' ye want to make me walk all the way up here after you for?" shrieked Mr. Spoopendyke. "Are ye waiting to be launched, like a ship? Can't ye walk as far as that? What are ye hoisting up the legs of your pants for? They ain't skirts. Now, look at me. See how I go in, and you follow me when I beckon to you. Watch me now."

Mr. Spoopendyke plunged in and swashed around a few minutes in safety, but the treacherous water was biding its time. Another wave caught him and rolled him over, pumped itself into his stomach, drew him under, whirled him around and finally deposited him, howling, on the sand.

"Got most ready to get in?" he jerked out, as he

climbed up himself and assumed a perpendicular. "Think I 'm going to slam around all day like a water-spout, waiting for you? What did you come here for? Find any fun standing there like a soda-water sign? Why don't you get in the water, if you 're going to? Come on now."

"I 'm afraid," snivelled Mrs. Spoopendyke. "If I go in I know I will be drowned."

"No you won't get drowned, either. Can't you hold on to me? What did you put on that shirt and trousers for if you meant to get drowned? What are you doing around here? Now, when I get in again, you come along or else you go home."

Mr. Spoopendyke plunged into the surf, but as he came up he missed the rope. For a second or two he sprawled around and then began to yell. Mrs. Spoopendyke eyed him for a moment, and then her fear for him overcame her fears for herself, and with a yell she dashed in and hauled him out by the hair.

"Dod gast the water," choked Mr. Spoopendyke, "I'm full of the measly stuff. So ye got in, did n't ye? Let go my hair, will ye? What d' ye think you are, anyway, a steam barber's shop? Going to let go that hair some time?" But frightened out of all reason Mrs. Spoopendyke clung still, and hauled Mr. Spoopendyke to his bathing house.

"Oh, if I had n't saved you!" she sobbed.

"Oh, yes, you saved me, did n't you?" sneered Mr. Spoopendyke. "All you want is four air-tight compartments and two sets of thole pins to be a patent life raft. Going to let go of that hair?"

And as she released him they went to their separate compartments.

XXIV.

ABE WALLACE'S LOVE.

AFTER BRET HARTE.

"WHAT 's er matter wid yer?" demanded Abe Wallace, with a not unnatural petulance under the circumstances. "What er ye lingerin' around that visage er mine for? Can't yer rasp that countenance?"

Obviously he could n't For nearly an hour he had strapped his razors and mowed diligently, but barber though he was of a thousand, barber extraordinary to Leaping Antelope Run, he seemed to make no headway against Abe's bristling badge of manhood.

"If yer razors won't cut, shoot 'em off. Ye'ar me? Shoot 'em off." And the handsome, sunburned miner composed himself for the novel operation.

"Is the barber at home?" asked a low, sweet, musical voice, entering the door at that moment.

He started. No yellow water running from his pan had ever looked as sweet to him as that voice. It percolated him, and he arose from the chair a new man. The rough life passed away from him. The crust formed by his habits and hardened by his surroundings was broken.

"Permit me, madam, to assure you that this individual before you is the barber," said Abe; and his new dignity sat easily upon him and seemed a part of him.

"I am on my way from Boston to the Sandwich Islands," said the young girl, quietly, "and our carriage broke down. I thought I would improve the opportunity and have my hair banged. Oh! no, no," she exclaimed, as Abe gallantly drew forth a thousand-dollar draft on New York. "Not for the world. I've six millions of dollars, not only in my own right, but in my pocket. I will pay for any service."

As the barber proceeded with his task, Abe walked the shop nervously. A presage of danger oppressed him. The chestnut curls on his forehead grew damp with anxiety. He knew life, in his rough way, and he knew barbers. The fair young girl would be no match for the frontier hairdresser, if the worst should come. And why should it not come? Had she not millions in her pocket? He glanced at the tiny feet planted squarely and firmly on the stool before her, and recognized character. He knew nothing of Boston, but he understood feet.

"And do you live in this funny place, te he?" asked the girl, smiling at Abe's reflection in the glass.

"I do," sighed Abe. "Misfortunes have cast my bark of life high upon this barren shore, and left me with only the shelter the sea-weeds afford."

"Te he; how odd. Ouch!"

But Abe grasped him and laid him upon the floor. The barber had made a dive for the dainty pocket and had failed.

Leaping Antelope Run was aroused. Such an attack found no apologists among the wild, rough miners. Whatever they might be inherently, they would tolerate nothing of the kind in the barber.

"Away to the dull thud!" demanded one, more intelligent than the rest. And they echoed the cry till the moonlit air was shivered and the beams crept away convulsively. They may have expected him to beg, but he eyed them sternly.

"Oh, my! what will they do with him?" asked the beauty with one eye. She had no need to speak. The thrill of that eye struck a chord in Abe Wallace.

"They 'll sprain his neck, darling," murmured Wallace in tender accents. This feeling was new to him, but he understood it.

"Gracious! and may I see him?" whispered she with the other eye.

Abe's answer was lost in the sullen roar of the crowd.

Out under the grand old trees that fringed the mines; out under the whisper of the leaves; out through the shadows. The winds swept down from the Sierras; velvet winds, but pitiless. They shook sweet voices out of their satin garments, but not a pleading tone for that human barber, soon to be neither barber nor human.

The rope was around his neck. Willing hands were ready. A cloud floated across the face of the moon, but she struggled from behind it, held by the horror of the scene.

"Hold!" commanded Abe. And then addressing the barber, he asked, "You are justice of the peace, are you not?"

"I am," responded the condemned in low, steady tones.

"Then marry us," said Wallace, drawing the Boston girl's arm within his own.

"You do take this woman for your wedded wife?" asked the barber, with a strange glitter in his eye.

"I do," responded Abe.

"You do take this man for your wedded husband?" inquired the barber with a peculiar smile.

"Te, he; I suppose so, te, he!" whispered the musical voice.

"Then I pronounce you man and wife. Go to the devil."

The rope tightened, but as he went up the barber uttered a wild, demoniac laugh.

Then with the shadow of the Sierras gathering around him, he hung dead.

Try as he might, Abe could not shake off the influence of that laugh. It was a ghost in his life.

"My God!" he screamed as he sprang from his seat a day or two afterward. "I understand it now."

"Understand what, love?" asked his beautiful bride, looking up from the bite of an apple.

"I know why he laughed. I know why the barber laughed with his dying breath," he moaned.

"Gracious goodness! What was it for?" she demanded with dimpling smiles.

"Because he died without giving us a marriage certificate."

With a wild shriek the Boston girl sank dead at his feet.

The barber was avenged.

XXV.

NOT ALTOGETHER SATISFACTORY.

"But what I can't understand," said Mrs. Spoopendyke argumentatively, after her husband had carefully explained to her all about the Chinese letter, "what I don't understand is, if Mr. Garfield says he did n't send the letter, how did Mr. Morey get it?"

"He did n't get it, they say," returned Mr. Spoopendyke. "They claim that Morey never saw or heard of it. Don't you see?"

"Perfectly. But who got it? If it was mailed to Mr. Morey, how could anybody else get it? If Mr. Garfield should write a letter to me, how would a newspaper get hold of it?"

"Well, if he ever does, they 'll know it. Can't ye understand anything at all, scarcely? The Democrats say that Mr. Garfield wrote the letter, and the Republicans say he did n't."

"What do the Greenbackers say? That would be important—"

"Dod gast the Greenbackers!" retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "What have they got to do with it? The question is whether Mr. Garfield wrote it."

"I don't see why he did n't, if Mr. Morey got it. Now if Mr. Morey had n't got it, there might be some question; but"—

"What 's the matter with you?" demanded Mr.

Spoopendyke. "What are ye thinking with, your elbows? If Mr. Garfield did n't send it, how could Morey get it? S'pose he went fishing and caught it like an eel?"

"That 's the point," conceded Mrs. Spoopendyke. "But if Mr. Morey did get it, who sent it? He must have got it, because it was directed to him."

"That settles it," groaned Mr. Spoopendyke. "Nobody thought of that before. You 've got the whole postal system in a teaspoon. If somebody would fit you up with pigeon-holes and an iron safe you 'd only need to be assessed ten per cent by a campaign committee to be a post-office. If Mr. Garfield never sent that letter, of course Morey never got it. Ain't that plain? If he did get it, then the chances are that Mr. Garfield wrote it. Can ye see that?"

"That 's just what I said. Now, if Mr. Morey did n't get it, how did the newspapers get hold of it? Did Mr. Garfield send it to the newspaper?"

"Oh, did n't he?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "He took it around himself, and sprained his leg doing it. Oh! you 've struck it. It took your logic to fetch out the facts. With your metaphysics you only want a red and green light to be a drug store. The Republicans say that Garfield did n't write it or send it, and Morey never got it or saw it. Can you get that through your head? Is there room in your skull for that idea?"

"Plenty," rejoined Mrs. Spoopendyke. "But don't the Democrats say that Mr. Garfield did write it and Mr. Morey did get it? They may know as much about it as the Republicans, and then they 've got the letter to prove it. If they did n't have the letter it would be dif-

ferent, and it shows that it went to Mr. Morey. Now, the only thing is whether Mr. Morey was a Democrat or Republican. If he was —"

"Are ye an idiot? Have ye got to go to night school to be a fool? Don't you know Morey's dead? He ain't Republican or Democrat either; he's an angel, if he's had luck. He left that letter among his papers, and his wife gave it out for publication."

"That ends it," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "If his wife gave it out, I know he never got it. That's just the way with some women. Always getting their poor dead husbands in trouble. She ought to be ashamed. And so Mr. Garfield ain't to be President."

"Do you know what you want?" shouted Mr. Spoopendyke. "You want a high chimney and a gravelled walk to be a lunatic asylum. Who says he won't be President? Why can't he be President?"

"If he didn't write the letter how can he?" argued Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"What do you suppose the letter was, a measly flower-pot? Think it was a shot tower? What d'ye s'pose it was any way?"

"Why, his letter of acceptance, was n't it? Was n't it something about his nomination?"

"No, it was n't it!" sneered Mr. Spoopendyke. "It was a confession that he was old man Bender. That's what it was. It laid the blame of knocking Nathan's brains out with Charley Ross on George Washington — that's what it was. Got it now? Think you can talk about it like a human being another time?" And Mr. Spoopendyke shot out of the house.

"Well, well," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she held the

bedspread up, and figured on whether she should turn it over or have it washed, "I'm glad I'm beginning to understand politics. But if Mr. Garfield did n't write the letter, and Mr. Morey was alive, it would go hard with Mrs. Morey for giving it out. A woman can't be too careful about what she does in politics." And having decided to turn the spread, Mrs. Spoopendyke tied a towel around her head, and having dusted her husband's private papers, put them away where no human being could ever find them.

XXVI.

AN ESTEEMED CONTEMPORARY.

"I'M an editor myself," said he, as he planted his feet on the *Eagle* editor's desk, and lit that functionary's pipe. "I throw ink on the Up Gulch *Snorter* at Deadwood, and you bet I make some reading matter for the boys. Get the *Snorter* on exchange here?"

"I think not," replied the editor. "Don't know that I ever heard of it."

"You ain't been long in the ink business, have you?" asked the stranger quickly. "You don't seem to be up in the literature of the day. That *Snorter* throws more influence to the square foot than all the papers in Deadwood. Let me show you the style of that periodical." And he drew a file of back numbers out of his pocket. "See them advertisements? All cash. Meeting of county board; fist fight in the common council; mine

caved in on nineteen men; four women lynched; mayor of town convicted of burglary; raid by Indians — all live news items. See the editorial? This is what I say about the Rapid City *Enterprise:* 'The distinguished consideration in which we hold the three-ply jackass who edits our noxious contemporary is only equaled by the rapidity with which the tumble bugs will roll him out of town in the spring.' Spicy, eh! You bet! There's some poetry. Wrote it myself. Made it up out of my head. How's this?

"'The radicals have nominated
That lousy, drunken, dissipated,
Cockeyed horse thief, Jim McFadden.
Our candidate is Fatty Madden!'"

"And we elected him, too, for old stock! We go in for poetry out our way, from way back."

"We don't do it in just that way here," said the *Eagle* editor, with a smile. "Our folks" —

"That's where you're off. You haven't educated your folks up to high taste. Where I live we're cultured clear to the roof. Here's my remarks about the editor of the Vermilion *Repeater*, when he wanted to split the territory: 'We don't want to reflect on the press, but we are compelled to say that the editor of the *Repeater* has stolen government mules so long for a living that he begins to flatter himself that he, too, is a d—d ass!' That busted his business."

"But don't the other editors ever pitch into you?" asked the *Eagle*, rather astounded at this revelation in journalism.

"You just bet, pardner! Then we get back in this

way. This is some poetry on the Fargo *News* man for saying that I learned to read and write in the Wisconsin Penitentiary. Listen to this: —

"'There is an old clam up in Fargo
Who buys all his rum by the cargo.
He gets drunk and spues,
And calls it the *News*,
And then the whole gang to the bar go!'

"I have n't heard from him since, but he 'll get around to me by and by. Here 's a little criticism on our opera house that was regarded very highly when it was pupped: 'Manager Whitney is giving a high toneder performance than our citizens have a right to expect for two bits. He has engaged the beautiful Gambetta for two weeks, and for high, artistic kicking she has no peeress. Her standing jump shows careful thought and study, and her toe whirls are unprecedented in the history of the ballet. Mr. Whitney has shored up the east end of his minstrel troupe with the justly celebrated Patsey Maginnis, the best bones of modern eras. We are sorry to chronicle a row at this temple of Thespian virtue last night, and we recommend Manager Whitney, if Shang Johnson comes monkeying around there again, to crack his nut with a bottle.' And he did it, too. It shows the power of the press."

"How are you on the political questions?" asked the *Eagle*.

"Well, we purport to be Democratic, but men makes a difference. It depends on who 's nominated. We supported Klingman for city marshal, though he 's a Republican. We got around it in this way. We

said, 'While the Radical party is pigheaded as a freight mule on all questions of importance, yet we have a pledge from Tom Klingman that he will not use the office of marshal to affect the tariff, and we will bet four hundred to two-fifty that he will go through the canvass as the coroner goes through the pockets of a dead nigger.' Klingman put up pretty well, and I stood to win on that racket."

"I suppose your paper is confined to local matters. You don't do much in the way of general literature," said the *Eagle*, by way of keeping up the conversation.

"There 's where you 're on your back again. It comes high, but our people will have it. See this story from *Harper's* biled down to half a column, but it gives all the facts. Then here 's a poem by my daughter. She 's a powerful slinger when she 's fed up to it. Boiled beef sets her a going, and a bottle of beer fetches the balance. How does this strike you? This is hern. It 's called 'Ode To-Night.'

"'The Evening for her bath of dew
Is partially undressed,
The Sun behind a bobtail flush
Is setting in the west,
The Planets light the heavens with
The flash of their cigars,
The Sky has put its night-shirt on
And buttoned it with stars.

"'I love the timid, shrinking Night,
Its shadows and its dew;
I love the Constellations bright,
So old and yet so new!
I love Night better than the Day,
For people looking on,
Can't see me skinning round to meet
My own, my darling John!'

"You don't get any better truck than that in the East. You see, our people have got to have the first chop or bust. It 'livens a paper up, too, this poetry, and it's fat for the printers. Here 's a little thing I dashed right off on the Yankton *Vindicator* for claiming that I swindled the government on a hay contract: —

"'A delirious Yankton reporter
Has been pitching into the *Snorter*.
We find he 's the man
Who adopted a plan
To kill his wife rather 'n support her!'

"He ain't been seen since. Well, pard, I must get out on the trail. If you 're ever out Deadwood way, drop down the chimney and see me. You might as well put me on your exchange list, and if you ever pick up an item you can't use, drop me a line and I 'll pay you a little something. So long!"

Parties desirous of examining the files of the Up Gulch *Snorter*, hereafter, will do well to call at the *Eagle* office before going elsewhere.

XXVII.

SPOOPENDYKE'S SUSPENDERS.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he stretched himself and drew on his pantaloons, "you 've cleaned these trousers up first rate. This is what I call economy. It saves money. If I 'd taken 'em to the

tailor's it would have cost a couple of dollars at least, and you've saved just that amount." And Mr. Spoopendyke went to his ablutions, and then pulled on his shirt.

"I'll clean your coat, too, if you like," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Leave it at home some day and I'll take this spot out of the sleeve." And Mrs. Spoopendyke bustled around and looked delighted with the idea of pleasing her husband.

"Where's my suspenders?" asked Mr. Spoopendyke, screwing himself around and looking down his back. "You did n't clean the suspenders clear out of sight, did you?"

"They were there when you put on your pants," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I have n't touched them. What did you do with them?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, I did something with them! What d' ye s'pose I did with them? Think I set 'em up in business somewhere, don't ye? Got an idea I gave 'em a vacation to go fishing, have n't ye? Well, I did n't, and mor'n that I did n't send 'em away to be educated for the ministry. Where's my suspenders? Where 'd you put 'em? S'pose I 'm going around holding these pants up all day? Think I got no business interests besides holding on my breeches with both hands? What 'id you do with the measly things?"

"I know I did n't take them off the pants," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, pulling open the bureau drawers and hustling things round in a vain endeavor to find the missing articles.

"Maybe I can fix your pants so you won't need any suspenders to-day, and I 'll find them before night," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"That 's it. You 've got it," raved Mr. Spoopendyke. "How are you going to fix 'em? Going to tie them on with a shoestring, like you do your bustle? Going to walk round behind me all day and hold 'em on? P'r'aps you can pull 'em up and button 'em around my neck! How d' ye propose to fix 'em? Going to put 'em on me upside down so if they fall they 'll fall up? If I had your head I 'd go out to service as a file. Fix 'em, why don't ye? Why don't ye fix 'em? These trousers are getting sick at the stomach, waiting to be fixed!" And Mr. Spoopendyke shot across the room and dove under the wardrobe in search of the lost suspenders.

"They must be there somewhere."

"Show 'em to me then!" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Take a stick and point 'em out to me! Of course they 're here somewhere, only just put your thumb on 'em! What have ye done with 'em? Can't ye recollect whether ye made 'em up into hat-bands for the heathen like you did my dressing-gown, or whether you planted them to see if they would grow, like you did my straw hat? Think they walked off like a croton bug? S'pose those suspenders have taken their girl to a picnic? What kind of housekeeping d' ye call this any how? Where 's my suspenders?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke, poking around in the soiled-clothes bag. "Where 's those suspenders?" and he pulled the books off the shelf and rummaged around behind the case with a broom handle for a divining-rod.

"Just let me buckle them tight behind," said Mrs. Spoopendyke; "the strap will hold them."

"That 's the scheme," shrieked Mr. Spoopendyke;

"something's got to hold them! If I was as sharp as you I'd get rich hiring out for an oyster knife. All you want is to have somebody sit cross-legged on you, and come home two weeks after you're expected to be a tailor shop! Going to find those dog gasted suspenders between now and the next war?"

"I know they were on his pants when he put them on," mused Mrs. Spoopendyke, entering upon a little inductive reasoning. "He did n't take them off, and so they must be there now." And the good woman approached her husband with a smile.

"Oh! now they're going to be fixed," said Mr. Spoopendyke, with a horrible grin. "P'r'aps you're going to cut buttonholes in your hands and feet, and hang over my shoulders, ain't ye? Want me to put 'em on over my head, like a measly shirt with two tucks and a flounce to it, don't ye? Maybe you think those suspenders hurried down to breakfast, so's to get the first crack at the morning paper, don't you?"

But Mrs. Spoopendyke made no response. Opening the back of her husband's fluttering shirt, she saw the missing suspenders. He had slipped them over his shoulders before assuming the muslin, and had forgotten all about them.

"Smart as a whip, ain't ye?" growled Mr. Spoopendyke, as he drew off his shirt and let the suspenders down. "If my head was as clear as yours I'd hire out for a church bell. You only need four lenses and a drop of rain water to be a microscope." And Spoopendyke hurried on his clothes and scuttled down stairs to get the morning paper before his wife could make a clutch at it.

XXVIII.

A PECULIAR BOARDER.

A WELL-DRESSED and handsome young lady, with rich golden hair and sapphire eyes, seated herself in the parlor of the Oriental Hotel, at Coney Island, one day last week, and called a waiter.

"Who, prithee, is manager now of this brave hostelrie?" she inquired of the boy who waited upon her.

"Yes, ma'am, he 's down dem yere stairs in de office. He 's Mr. Romeo Gillis what done de bossin' about yere."

"Bid him then approach," said the lady, "for unto him I fain would speak me of the travail which my poor heart suffers lest I fail of those accommodations in meat or sleep that lie in his advantage now to barter."

The waiter eyed her a moment, and then called Mr. Gillis, who entered the parlor all smiles.

"Good Romeo, for so I hear thee called; sweet Romeo, as I would call thee to myself, hast rooms?"

"Why, yes," responded Mr. Gillis, somewhat taken back. "We have a few left; what would you like?"

"Nay, gentle Romeo, speak not so sternly, but rather tell me what thou hast. Perchance I might ask what might be beyond thy gift or sale or rent. Coin thy thoughts into words, and from the portals of thy countenance drop the silver currency upon my waiting ears."

"How high would you like to go?" said Mr. Gillis, backing toward the door.

"Thy tongue asketh now conundrums, pure Romeo. Dost mean financially, or dost thou reckon from the sordid earth to where your roof doth glisten in the noontide sun?"

"Oh! I say," responded Mr. Gillis, nervously, "I mean, you know, do you want a parlor or rooms upstairs? Don't want to offend, you know, but just tell me what you'd like, and I'll try to fix it."

"All places are parlors with thee, fair Romeo, and recollections of thee would light up dungeons" —

"Gas in every room, ma'am; hot and cold water. Shall I call chambermaid, ma'am?"

"Nay, nay. Invoke not cords and nurse. My blazing brain" —

"Want a room with a fire escape?" asked Mr. Gillis, anxiously.

"Might I but find escape from these swift waves that burn my heart. But, Romeo, if anon I take unto myself such room as thy bright eyes have illumined, what" —

"Four dollars, ma'am. Four dollars a day."

"And canst thou not for less appease my hungering heart?"

"That will be extra, ma'am. You can feed *a la carte* or *table d'hôte*, as you prefer. I'm only speaking for the room."

"And I — I am speaking of thee, my Romeo. My bankrupt heart" —

"Any baggage, ma'am?"

"Ay, baggage! He thinks me poor i' the world since I have yielded him the wealth I had of spirit."

"'Cause transients without baggage must pay in advance," said Mr. Gillis, in a soothing voice.

"And may I see this cave to which thou wouldst consign me, glowing with the hope of life? Wouldst show me, Romeo, the prison now to which I am ordained?"

"The prison, you mean the cells; they're over in the other house. I don't have —"

"Nay, sweet Romeo, not those. I fain would see the chamber whereof you told in those tender tones was" —

"Four dollars? You mean a four-dollar room?" said Mr. Gillis, brightening up.

"I marked me not the sordid value that thou didst place upon thy proffered retreat. 'T is food" —

"We haven't any four-dollar rooms with meals. You can see the room and make up your mind what you want to do."

"Come cords, come nurse, and I'll do this chamber fair" —

"Certainly," said Mr. Gillis, as he dashed out of the parlor after the housekeeper.

Half an hour later Mr. Gillis entered the bar-room, pale and with fixed features.

"Come hither, gentle barkeep," he said, "fill me high a foaming chalice with the bitters intermingled with the spirit, while the crystal ice shines sparkling and the yellow peel floats idly on the bosom of the nectar, for I fain would fill my system with nepenthe from the sorrow I have felt, and Lethe of that long-legged, slab-sided, lantern-jawed old mixture of a Dominica hen and a Gibraltar jackass, who's been howling poetry to me. The confounded old heifer was

the agent of a baby's swing factory, and told the housekeeper she wanted to put four up in the parlor at forty dollars each. Say, you," he yelled, as the waiter who first called him dashed by, — "say, you imp of sulphur, if you ever let in another red-headed woman with a wen under her ear, I'll break your leg off and throw it away. Give me a cocktail before I put this house in need of repairs."

Taking one consideration with another, a hotel man's life is not a happy one.

XXIX.

STRAIGHTENING THE ACCOUNTS.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, "if you 'll bring me the pen and ink, I 'll look over your accounts and straighten 'em out for you. I think your idea of keeping an account of the daily expenses is the best thing you ever did. It 's business like, and I want to encourage you in it."

"Here 's the ink," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, growing radiant at the compliment. "I had the pen day before yesterday. Let me think." And she dove into her work-basket and then glanced nervously under the bureau.

"Well, do you suppose I 'm going to split up my finger and write with that?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Where 's the pen? I want the pen."

"I put it somewhere," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Ah!

here I have it. Now, you see," she continued, "I put what money I spend down here. This is your account here, and this is the joint account. You know" —

"What 's this?" asked Mr. Spoopendyke.

"That 's your account; this" —

"No, no, I mean this marine sketch in the second line?"

"That? Oh, that 's a 7."

"S'pose I ever spent seven dollars with a tail like that to it? If you 're going to make figures, why don't you make figures? What d' ye want to make a picture of a prize fight in a column of accounts for? What is this elephant doing here?"

"I think that 's a 2," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, dubiously. Maybe it 's a 4. I can tell by adding it up."

"What are you going to add up? D' ye count in this corner lot and that rose-bush and this pair of suspenders? D' ye add them in?"

"That 's a 6 and that is a 5 and the last is an 8. They come out all right, and during the last month you have spent more than I and the joint account together."

"Have n't either. When did I spend this broken-down gunboat?"

"That ain't a boat. It 's $42 for your suit."

"Well, this tramp fishing off a rock, when did I spend him?"

"It ain't a tramp. It 's $50 cash you took, and I don't know what you spent it for. Look at my account, now" —

"What 's that man pulling a gig for?"

"It 's nothing of the sort. That ain't a gig, it 's $1

for wiggin. You see I've only spent twenty-two dollars in a month, and you've spent a hundred and eighty-four."

"You can't tell by this what I've done," growled Mr. Spoopendyke. "What's this rat-trap doing in the joint account?"

"That's fourteen cents for fruit, when you were sick."

"And this measly looking old hen, what has she got to do with it?"

"That's no hen. That's a 2. It means two dollars for having your chair mended."

"What have you charged me with this old graveyard for?"

"That's fifteen cents for sleeve elastics. The fifteen ain't plain, but that's what it is."

"How do you make out I have spent so much? Where's the vouchers? Show me the vouchers."

"I don't know what you mean," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, "but you spent all I put down."

"Have n't done anything of the sort. Show me some vouchers. Your account's all humbug. You don't know how to keep an account."

"Yes, I do," pleaded Mrs. Spoopendyke, "and I think it's all right."

"No, you don't. What do you mean by getting up engravings of a second-hand furniture store and claiming that it's my account? You're a great bookkeeper, you are. All you want is a sign hung between you and the other side of the street to be a commercial college. If I ever fail in business, I'm going to fill you up with benches and start a night school. Give me that pen." And Mr. Spoopendyke commenced running

up the columns. "Two two's four and eight twelve and four sixteen and carry one to the next and three is four. Here, this is wrong. You've got an eighteen for a twenty here."

"Eh?" jerked out Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"This is $204, not $184. I knew you could n't keep accounts. You can't even add up."

"That makes your account even bigger," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I didn't think it was so much."

Slam went the book across the room, followed by the pen, and the ink would have gone too, but Mrs. Spoopendyke cautiously placed it out of harm's way.

"Dod gast it!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke, as he tore off his clothes and prepared for bed. "You ain't fit to have a pen and ink. Next time I want accounts kept I 'll keep 'em chained up in the yard, and don't you go near 'em; you hear me?"

"Yes, dear," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she slipped the obnoxious book into the drawer.

XXX.

SOME DIFFICULTY ABOUT THE CALLS.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, "let me see the list of ladies you want me to call on. I really don't care to go around much, but a man ought to do what his wife wants him to do on New-Year's day. Where 's the list?"

"Here it is," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, fluttering around with her hair in her mouth. "I wrote them all out with the addresses for you, so you would n't have any trouble."

"What makes you put old Sister Lamb at the head of the list?" growled Mr. Spoopendyke. "She 's got a wart on her chin the size of a fire bell, and she can't talk anything but the advantages of egg over stove coal for heating the Sunday school."

"But she belongs to the church, and I don't believe any one else will call on her," reasoned Mrs. Spoopendyke. "She 'll be tickled to death to see you."

"What do you think I 'm starting out for?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke fiercely. "Got an idea I 'm going around like a missionary to carry the Gospel to people everybody else is afraid of? Who 's this? What 's this second name here? Who 's Mrs. Shklymbretov?"

"That 's Mrs. Wolverton. I promised her you would call. Never mind Mrs. Lamb, but you ought to call on Mrs. Wolverton."

"What for? What has she got in common with me, except that her bones are hollow? She don't know the difference between a Guinea pig and the burning of Jerusalem. Always wants to know if I don't think that Sodom and Gomorrah were parables. Is that the kind of list you 've made out? Want me to run around among the old monuments. Who 's Miss Swash?"

"That 's Mrs. Smith, the little widow. You know she 's interested in sending women out West to get husbands. She 'll amuse you."

"She will if she sees me. She 'll make me laugh like a hyena if she gets one eye on me. Who 's that yellow-

headed girl that sits two pews in front of us? I 'd call on her, now."

"She 's a little chit of a thing. You don't want to run after those young people — a man of your age!"

"What 's the reason I don't?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "Got an idea that I only care for the tough old people, have n't you? Think I 'm sort of Plymouth Rock, don't you? Got any more old landmarks that need inspection?"

"I don't care," remonstrated Mrs. Spoopendyke, indignantly; "they 're nice people, and I like to cultivate them. They may be along in life, but they can't help it."

"Cultivate 'em if you want to," growled Mr. Spoopendyke; "but if you think I 'm going hoeing around among 'em on the 1st of January, you 're left. What d' ye want to cultivate 'em for? With your friends and ideas, you only need weekly prayers and an alarm of fire to be an old woman's home. Who else have you got here? Mrs. Sliggonspratt, Mrs. Woptenslough, Miss Klmpzf" —

"You don't read them right at all," complained Mrs. Spoopendyke. "That 's Mrs. Silverspoon and Mrs. Worthington and Miss Hemmingway. They are just as nice as they can be."

"Are they the three old worthies who howl in the choir?" asked Mr. Spoopendyke, sternly. "They 've got a grandson old enough to be my father."

"They have n't," sobbed Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You know better."

"Well, most of 'em have. What d'ye want me to call on them for? Got any more old almanacs expect-

ing me? Where 's the Sphinx? You have n't got the Sphinx down here, nor the Tower of Babel? Who 're these other pyramids? Who 's Mrs. Upsidedown?"

"That 's Mrs. Edgerton. She sent you the jelly when you were sick, and you said she was the best woman in Brooklyn. You 'll have to call on her for politeness," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, severely.

"I won't, either," shouted Mr. Spoopendyke. "The jelly was sour, and she made me pay a dollar toward a plaster of Paris angel for a starving family out in Flatbush. Who 's this other nurse of George Washington's? Here, this is a mistake. I went to old Miss Schumslock's funeral thirty years ago."

"You did n't! You never did!" proclaimed Mrs. Spoopendyke, thoroughly aroused. "That is n't her name either. It 's Miss Schofield, and she is the best friend I 've got. I only want" —

"I know what you want," hissed Mr. Spoopendyke. "You want a few more acquaintances, and a map to be a guide-book to ancient Troy. Think I 'm going to call on that old monolith? Got anything here that belongs to modern times? Know anybody who has been dug up within six or eight centuries? Who 's that black-eyed girl in the Bible class? Don't she hang out a flag to-day?"

"I would n't look at her," sniffed Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I would n't have you go there for worlds. Beside, she don't receive."

"What 's this?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. What 's Mrs. Wlmpqstvxq got to do with it? What cemetery will I find her in?"

"That 's Mrs. Willoughby," explained Mrs. Spoop-

endyke, complacently. "She's the young widow who recently joined the church."

"I don't mind calling on her," said Mr. Spoopendyke. "She was n't born more 'n four thousand years before the Christian era. Got any more like her? Does this measly list contain anybody else who was n't the mother of the Chinese Empire? Think of any more gravestones that have n't had the epitaphs worn off?"

"No," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, coldly, "and now I remember Mrs. Willoughby receives calls with friends in Buffalo."

"Dod gast your dod-gasted list!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke, dancing on the unhappy document. "What d' ye think I am, a ghoul? S'pose I 'm going to prance around among all the measly old ghosts in Brooklyn? S'pose I 'm going to swash around and eat cake and drink lemonade with a lot of illustrations of the Silurian period? Think I 'm going to spend the day with a lot of articulated old skeletons just because they belong to the same church that I do?" And Mr. Spoopendyke popped out of the house like a bung, and went next door to see if his friend Tortorthumb knew any mummies of whose history there was some tradition.

"I don't care," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she whirled around two or three times to practise kicking her train, "if he don't call on the church people they 'll be hopping mad, and if he does, he won't have much of a time, so he 'll wish he was dead either way." And Mrs. Spoopendyke bustled into the parlor to assure a sandy-haired young man with a stiff neck that it was awful good for him to come, and to learn that he had n't come far of his own volition, but had slid most of the way.

XXXI.

THE FIRST WOMAN OF BISMARCK.

In the early days of Bismarck,
From tradition it appears,
There was lack of woman's nursing,
And a dearth of woman's tears.

For the pioneering gentry,
Busy mapping out the plots,
And defending their own titles
While they jumped each other's lots,

Had neglected altogether
That one element, about
Which circles all society,
And left the woman out.

When the error was discovered,
Those familiar with the facts,
Said a town without a woman
Was like euchre without jacks.

And they held that man could never
Hope to rise above the brutes,
Without a woman's loving hand
To clean his shirts and boots.

Consequently great rejoicing
Seized straightway on the town,
When a stern-wheel boat from Benton
Set a little woman down.

And when she came among them,
And dropped her bag and trunk,
They recognized God's mercies,
And started on a drunk.

She was n't very handsome,
Or especially well dressed;
She had no wealth to back her,
And her manners were n't the best;

She professed no deep religion,
Nor insight into books,
And they dubbed her Short and Dirty,
From her longitude and looks;

And she might have had shortcomings;
That, they honestly confessed,
But to them she was a woman,
And that coppered all the rest.

So they bent in tender worship
Before this female shrine,
Whose every word was statute,
And whose shoe was number nine.

One cold, dark, winter evening,
There was trouble in the town,
A fearful northern blizzard,
Had blown some shanties down.

And the red fire dancing wildly
  Above the pallid snow,
Lighted up a burning building,
  And pale faces down below.

Lighted up a burning building,
  With a hot, remorseless glare,
And an old face at a window
  Snowy white with fierce despair!

The quivering crowd shrank backward
  From that seething, hell-like place,
As the fighting, roaring, hungry tongues
  Swept up toward that face.

And the old and wretched cripple,
  Who had lost those useful tools
Called legs, in his profession
  Of educating mules,

Gazed down upon the horror
  That burned his very eyes,
And turned his life away from earth,
  And fixed it in the skies.

Through the helpless mob came bursting
  A short, strong woman's frame,
And climbed upon the awning,
  Through the ranks of smoke and flame, —

Climbed up the light, frail gutter,
  With her hands and knees and teeth,
Till she reached the falling cripple,
  And faced the crowd beneath.

Then she raised the lump of manhood,
  And threw it in the street,
As the building waved and tottered
  And sank beneath her feet.

. . . . .

"I believe," said Mr. Hannafin,
  To a crowd that came from far,
To hear the dismal details,
  And foregather at the bar, —

"I believe that Short and Dirty
  Has found a better place
Than Bismarck for society.
  Put that blue stack on the ace."

XXXII.

FIFINE.

AFTER VICTOR HUGO.

Chapter One.

JACQUES was an organ grinder. He had a square box filled with cast-off gas-pipes. When he twisted the crank the air rushed into the pipes and the music came out at the other end.

Fifine liked to hear Jacques play and he liked to play for her. Jacques loved Fifine, and treasured all

the *sous* she gave him. Fifine did not love Jacques, and they both knew it.

"*Bon jour*, Jacques," said Fifine.

"*Bon jour*, Fifine," said Jacques.

This conversation took place just after the 12th of July.

Chapter Two.

Fifine's father was a bourgeois. Jacques was a long primer. Jacques dared not tell of his noble birth, lest the hatred entertained for the Bourbons should result in his death. For this reason he played the hand organ. Playing the organ brought him near Fifine.

"What are you doing, Fifine?" asked Jacques one morning as he was twisting "Nancy Lee" out of his hand organ.

"Washing windows," said Fifine. "I wish I had the North Pole to reach that top one."

Jacques picked up a rock and smashed his hand organ.

"What have you done, Jacques?" asked Fifine.

"Nothing," said Jacques.

Then he walked off.

Chapter Three.

Jacques walked to the North Cape, and jumped into the Arctic Ocean. In four hours he swam to the pack ice around Spitzbergen. He climbed up on the ice and walked to the eighty-seventh degree of north latitude. A polar bear attacked him. When the bear opened his mouth Jacques crept in.

"This is warm," said Jacques.

"That 's cool," said the bear.

The bear started north and plunged into the open sea around the pole. It is claimed by some scientists that there is no open sea there. The bear knew better.

Jacques looked out of the bear's mouth and saw he was in a whirlpool. He glanced at his compass and saw that the needle pointed to the centre of the pool.

"The north pole is there," said Jacques.

Chapter Four.

Gervais was a map pedler. He loved Fifine, and often presented her with maps of Australia. Gervais loved Fifine, but she did not care for him. She used his maps to stop up rat-holes.

"*Bon soir*, Fifine," said Gervais.

"*Bon soir*, Gervais," said Fifine.

This was while the Bourbons were plotting to overthrow the revolution. Danton was dead. Robespierre had unclinched his bloody hand from the throat of the people, and the coming carnage of March already sent its throbs through the arteries of Paris.

"What are you doing, Fifine," asked Gervais.

"Washing windows," said Fifine. "I wish I had the South Pole to reach the top one."

Gervais threw his maps into the sewer and left. In six hours he had reached the Antarctic Continent.

Chapter Five.

A seal attacked Gervais. He sprang into the seal and settled himself comfortably.

"This is fun," said Gervais.

"That 's business," said the seal.

The seal waddled over the ice, and in an hour had reached the open polar sea. Gervais looked through the seal's eye and saw he was in a whirlpool, toward the centre of which the needle of his compass always pointed.

"The pole is in there," said Gervais; "I shall marry Fifine."

Chapter Six.

The rings of the whirlpool brought Jacques and Gervais to the centre at the same moment Jacques was at the North Pole and Gervais at the South. Both pulled at the same time. Neither pole would stir. It was a continuous stick, and neither could succeed until the other let go. They stopped pulling and spit on their hands, and then pulled again. The excitement was terrific. They were twenty-two thousand miles apart, and neither knew of the other. Each was brave and determined, but it was no use.

"Come out," said Jacques, tugging away.

"Come up," said Gervais.

Both poles stuck fast.

Chapter Seven.

"How goes it, Fifine?" said Francois.

"First-rate," said Fifine. "I don't wash windows any more. We keep a girl."

Fifine loved Francois. He had been a cardinal, but had retired from business.

"Let us get married, Fifine," said Francois.

"Good enough," said Fifine. "Wait till I get my hat."

She came out and saw Gervais and Jacques standing at the gate. Each had a long pole on his shoulder, broken in the middle.

"Here is the North Pole, Fifine," said Jacques.

"This is the South Pole, Fifine," said Gervais.

"Come, Fifine," said Francois.

"You can take the poles back, Messieurs. I don't wash windows since we got a girl. Excuse me. I am going to marry Francois."

Chapter Eight.

Francois and Fifine came back married. In front of the house they saw two poles standing upright. Jacques was at the top of one and Gervais on top of the other.

"Good by, Fifine!" said Gervais.

"*Dieu vous garde*, Fifine," said Jacques.

Then they fell off the poles on top of Francois and smashed him like a walnut.

"Great Scott!" said Fifine. "I don't believe any of them are good for much now, but the poles may be worth something."

Fifine laughed, and went into the house.

XXXIII.

A COMPLICATED GARMENT.

"My dear," observed Mr. Spoopendyke, looking up from his paper, "I think I would be greatly benefited this summer by sea baths. Bathing in the surf is an excellent tonic, and if you will make me up a suit, and one for yourself, if you like, we 'll go down often and take a dip in the waves."

"The very thing," smiled Mrs. Spoopendyke, "you certainly need something to tone you up, and there 's nothing like salt water. I think I 'll make mine of blue flannel, and, let me see, yours ought to be red, my dear."

"I don't think you caught the exact drift of my remark," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "I did n't say I was going into the opera business, or that I was going to hire out to some country village as a conflagration. My plan was to go in swimming, Mrs. Spoopendyke, to go in swimming, and not grow up with the country as a cremation furnace. You can make yours of blue, if you want it, but you don't make mine of red, that 's all."

"There 's a pretty shade of yellow flannel" —

"Most indubitably, Mrs. Spoopendyke, but if you think I 'm going to masquerade around Manhattan Beach in the capacity of a ham, you have n't yet seized my idea. I don't apprehend that I shall benefit by the waters any more by going around looking like a Santa

Cruz rum barrel. What I want is a bathing suit, and if you can't get one up without making me look like a Fulton-street car, I'll go and buy something to suit me."

"Would you want it all in one piece, or do you want pants and blouse?"

"I want a suit easy to get in and out of. I'm not particular about following the fashion. Make up something neat, plain, and substantial, but don't stick any fancy colors into it. I want it modest and serviceable."

Mrs. Spoopendyke made up the suit, under the guidance of a lady friend, whose aunt had told her how it should be constructed. It was in one piece, and when completed was rather a startling garment.

"I'll try it on to-night," said Mr. Spoopendyke, eying it askance when it was handed him.

Before retiring, Mr. Spoopendyke examined the suit, and then began to get into it.

"Why did n't you make some legs to it? What d' ye want to make it all arms for?" he inquired, struggling around to see why it did n't come up behind.

"You 've got it on sideways," exclaimed Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You 've got one leg into the sleeve."

"I 've got to get it on sideways. There ain't any top to it. Don't you know enough to put the arms up where they belong? What d' ye think I am anyhow? A starfish? Where does this leg go?"

"Right in there. That 's the place for that leg."

"Then where 's the leg that goes in this hole?"

"Why, the other leg."

"The measly thing 's all legs. Who 'd you make this thing for, me? What d' ye take me for, a centipede?

Who else is going to get in here with me? I want somebody else. I ain't twins. I can't fill this business up. What d'ye call it, any way; a family machine?"

"Those other places ain't legs; they 're sleeves."

"What are they doing down there? Why ain't they up here where they belong? What are they there for, snow-shoes? S'pose I 'm going to stand on my head to get my arms in those holes?"

"I don't think you 've got it on right," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke. "It looks twisted."

"That 's the way you told me. You said, 'put this leg here and that one there,' and there they are. Now, where does the rest of me go?"

"I made it according to the pattern," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Then it 's all right, and it 's me that 's twisted," sneered Mr. Spoopendyke. "I 'll have my arms and legs altered. All I want is to have my legs jammed in the small of my back and my arms stuck in my hips; then it 'll fit. What did you take for a pattern, a crab? Where 'd you find the lobster you made this thing from? S'pose I 'm going into the water on all fours? I told you I wanted a bathing suit, did n't I? Did I say anything about a chair cover?"

"I think if you take it off and try it on over again, it 'll work," reasoned Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Oh! of course. I 've only got to humor the gasted thing. That 's all it wants." And Mr. Spoopendyke wrenched it off with a growl.

"Now, pull it on," said Mrs. Spoopendyke.

Mr. Spoopendyke went at it again, and reversed the original order of disposing his limbs.

"Suit you now?" he howled. "That the way you

meant it to go? What's these things flopping around here?"

"Those are the legs, I'm afraid," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, dejectedly.

"What are they doing up here? Oh, I see. This is supposed to represent me making a dive. When I get this on, I'm going head first. Where's the balance? Where's the rest? Give me the suit that represents me head up." And Mr. Spoopendyke danced around the room in fury.

"Just turn it over, my dear," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, "and you are all right"

"How 'm I going to turn it over?" yelled Mr. Spoopendyke. "S'pose I'm going to carry around a steam boiler to turn me over when I want the other end of this thing up? S'pose I'm going to hire a man to go around with a griddle spoon and turn me over like a flapjack, just to please this dod-gasted bathing suit? D'ye think I work on pivots?"

"Just take it off and put it on the other way," urged Mrs. Spoopendyke, who began to see her way clear.

Mr. Spoopendyke kicked the structure up to the ceiling, and plunged into it once more. This time it came out all right, and as he buttoned it up and surveyed himself in the glass, the clouds passed away, and he smiled.

"I like it," he remarked, "the color suits me, and I think you have done very well, my dear; only," and he frowned slightly, "I wish you would mark the arms and legs so I can distinguish one from the other, or some day I will present the startling spectacle of a respectable elderly gentleman hopping around the beach upside down. That's all."

XXXIV.

FACTS VERSUS POETRY.

"WOULD you be kind enough to direct me to the editor?" asked a grave and venerable gentleman, with a kindly face and pleasant smile.

"He 's out," responded the Law Reporter. "Is there anything I can do?"

"I am Dr. Holmes," responded the gentleman.

"Where 's your office, Doctor? Come to see about the diphtheria? I can do as well as the editor. What is it?" And the Law Reporter braced himself.

"Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes," replied the gentleman, his handsome face beaming with good-nature. "I have a little poem I would like to submit. Shall I leave it with you?"

The Law Reporter took it and read it aloud.

"You call it a 'Winter Day on the Prairie,'" said he.

"H'm; yes."

"'A blinding glare, a silver sky,
A sea of snow, with frozen spray;
The foaming billows swelling high,
Updashed against the icy day.
White laden northern whirlwinds blow
Across the pale sea's heaving breast,
And fill the creamy ebb and flow
With stormy terror and unrest.

"'The storm birds flit athwart the main
Like rudderless, bewildered ships,
The stranded winds breathe sobs of pain
And frosty froth from pallid lips.
The seething, milky waves, in swift
Harsh struggle with the fate that binds,
Break into frozen rift and drift
Against the wrecked and straining winds.

"'A sea of loneliness and death,
Whose waves are ghosts, whose vales are graves,
Whose inspiration is the breath
That lurks in northern winter caves.
A snowy gloom, whose icy shade
Lies white beneath the spray-tipped crest,
Whose silver sombreness is laid
A glaring pall across its breast.'

"Just so, just so," continued the Law Reporter. "Did you want this published as it is?"

"I had thought something of giving it publicity," said the doctor.

"You 'll have to get the advertising clerk to register it then," retorted the Law Reporter. "I would n't take the responsibility of sending it in as it stands now."

"What seems to be the matter with it?" inquired the doctor.

"I don't think it is natural. Now, here, you take a snow-storm on the prairies, and make it a sea. Then you freeze it all up and make it dash around. You 've either got to thaw it out or quit dashing it. We may be able to alter it so it will do, if you 'll leave it."

"What alterations would you suggest?" asked the doctor.

"I 'd fix that first verse so as to be in accordance with the facts; make it 'sequential,' as we say in law. In-

stead of having the blinding and the silver and the foaming billows, and the white laden winds, and the creamy ebb and all that rot, I 'd put it in this way : —

"'In township thirty, range twenty-nine,
Described in the deed as prairie land,
It sometimes snows in the winter time,
As we are given to understand.
This alleged snow falls on a level,
It 's said, some several feet or more,
And when the wind blows like the devil,
It drifts from where it was before.'

"In that way," continued the Law Reporter, "you get the facts before the public without committing the paper to anything. Under your poem, any man who could prove that you were talking about his land could bring a libel suit, and the measure of damages would be what he could have sold it for if you had n't written it up as a sea."

"Will the other verse do?" asked the doctor.

"I 'm afraid not," replied the Law Reporter. "This business about the storm bird without a rudder, and stranded winds and milky waves, don't prove anything. They would n't be admitted in evidence anywhere. I suppose you want to express desolation, but the testimony is n't good. Why don't you say : —

"'In the place aforesaid, when the said winds blow,
The tenants thereof don't go about,
And such birds as find they can stand the snow
Look as though they 'd had their tails pulled out.
And when the said snow and said winds are gone,
It 's found the said land finds a ready taker,
For though you can't farm much when the winter 's on,
The property don't fall a cent an acre.'

"There you get your desolation and your birds like rudderless ships, and at the same time you throw in a clause which lets you out of the libel by showing that the snow don't affect the value of the ground. The way you had it, you would have brought all the western settlements down on us. Been a poet long?"

"I—I, that is, I begin to think not," gasped the unhappy doctor. "But can't you do something with the last verse?"

"We might leave that out altogether, or we might substitute something for it. The last verse is a contradiction of terms. It 's a *non sequiter*, as we say in law, and could have no *status* in court in the event of an action. You can't say snowy gloom, or white shade, and as for a glaring pall, I presume you mean the white velvet one they use for infants. I could n't pass that in, but I might change it for you. How would this do?

"'It is rumored that while the snow
Is on the land before described,
It looks as though one could n't sow
Seed to advantage, though this is denied.
Some people hold that it empties the pouch
To buy land in the winter in the north;
For this unsupported statement we do not vouch,
But give the story for what it is worth.'

"This, you see, gives all the sides of the question, without making the paper responsible for anything. I call that a superior article of poetry," continued the Law Reporter, reading the three stanzas over in an admiring tone of voice.

"But there is n't any poetry in it," stammered the doctor.

"What's the reason there isn't?" demanded the Law Reporter indignantly. "Don't it tell everything you did, and don't it rhyme in some places? Don't it get out all the facts, and don't it let people know what's going on?"

"Of course it does," chimed in the Police Reporter. "That's what I call a good item of poetry. I think you might add that startling developments may be expected, and that the police have got a clew to the perpetrator."

"That isn't necessary," replied the Law Reporter, loftily, "we poets always leave something to the reader's imagination."

"I believe I'll go," murmured the doctor.

"All right, sir. Come around any time when you've got some poetry you want fixed up." And the Law Reporter bowed the visitor out.

XXXV.

WOMAN IN POLITICS.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, "if you will come and sit down here, I'll explain the political situation to you. I am glad to see you take an interest in such things, for everybody ought to thoroughly understand what is going on in the country."

"I've been reading about them every day," rejoined Mrs. Spoopendyke, "and I think I know a good deal about politics now." And the good lady turned Turkey

red with the idea that she had excited her husband's admiration. "I think Mr. Garfield is too sweet to live, and that dear Mr. Hancock is just as nice as he can be. They are ever so much better than that odious English and Arthur. Oh! if I was a man, I would vote for Garfield and Hancock."

"That ain't the way to talk politics," said Mr. Spoopendyke. "I thought you said you knew something about it! Got an idea that Garfield and Hancock are some kind of a bonnet, have n't you? Well, they ain't, and they ain't a foreign Bible society either."

"Do you like English and Arthur best? They may be good men for the Presidency, but I saw more in the papers about Garfield and Hancock, and I thought they must be splendid. Perhaps I was mistaken."

"Garfield and Hancock ain't running together, I tell ye," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "They are running against each other."

"That 's another thing," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, complacently. "If they are doing that, I perfectly agree with you in thinking that English and Arthur are the best. They are perfect gentlemen, and Mr. Arthur is so handsome! I saw his picture" —

"Don't you know anything at all, scarcely?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "English and Arthur ain't twins. They are running against each other, too. Where 'd you find out about politics any way, in a cook book? P'r'aps you think these candidates are vegetables, Mrs. Spoopendyke, but they ain't; they're men with arms and legs; they ain't things to make a pudding of."

"Certainly; I know that," responded Mrs. Spoopen-

dyke, cheerfully, "but if Mr. Garfield is running against Mr. Hancock, and Mr. English is running against Mr. Arthur, I don't see what we're going to do. How are we going to choose?"

"But they've got to run against each other," explained Mr. Spoopendyke, with rising emphasis. "You don't suppose candidates all run together like a lot of hens, do you?"

"If Mr. Hancock and Mr. Garfield run against each other, won't Mr. Hancock have the best of it?"

"Why should he?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke.

"'Cause he's so big. If they were running together, he'd get beat, 'cause he's too fat. He could n't"—

"Does anybody in the country know what you're talking about? Do you s'pose they stand off and bump up against each other like a couple of freight trains? Got an idea they're going to roll up their trousers and run a leg race? I tell ye that Hancock is running for one President, and Garfield is running for another. Now d' ye understand?"

"Oh, that's it. Now I begin to see into it," returned Mrs. Spoopendyke, joyously. "So if you want to vote for two men for President, you must vote for English and Arthur. I understand it perfectly now. But"—

"Oh, yes, you understand it, don't ye?" yelled Mr. Spoopendyke. "You're the politician of seven ages. All you need is a registration book and a brass band to be a whole political campaign. I tell ye Hancock is running for President, and so is Garfield, and Arthur and English are running for Vice-President. Can you understand that?"

"Yes, I do; but do you think Arthur and English will get it. I read in one" —

"Get it! They can't both get it. Only one of 'em can get it," exclaimed Mr. Spoopendyke, suppressing his passion. "What d' ye think the Vice-Presidency is, a pair of pigeon-holes? One of 'em will be President and the other Vice-President. Now, can you bore that through your skull and remember it?"

"Why, of course; but I feel sorry for poor Mr. Garfield and poor Mr. Hancock. They 'll be awfully disappointed; but of course we can't help it. Which will be President, do you think, Mr. Arthur or Mr. Eng" —

"Dod gast it!" raved Mr. Spoopendyke. "You don't know enough to go to sleep when you're tired. Don't I tell you Garfield or Hancock will be President, and English or Arthur Vice-President? Say it over until you remember it. The tickets are Hancock and English, and Garfield and Arthur. Comprehend that?"

"Why, certainly. I saw those names on the banners. I remember it now. Which will be elected?"

"That 's the question," rejoined Mr. Spoopendyke, sarcastically. "If Mr. English can carry his own State and Ohio, he will be elected; but if Mr. Garfield can carry his own State and Indiana, he has an excellent show."

"What will Mr. Hancock and Mr. Arthur carry?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, with an air of absorbing interest.

"Carry!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke, "they 'll carry swill to the pigs, and that 's more 'n you know how to do. What d' ye s'pose they 'll carry?"

"I suppose Mr. Arthur will carry Mr. English's State,

won't he, and his own? And Mr. Hancock will carry Mr. Garfield's State and Governor's Island. Ain't that where he lives? I don't see what they want of each other's States. They ought" —

"Oh, you've got it," shrieked Mr. Spoopendyke. "You've got it boiled down. You only need a heavy rain and the side door of a bar-room to be an election day. What you want is a lot of blots and your name spelled wrong to be a poll list. Don't I tell ye that two of 'em are running against the other two, and the two that get the most States will be elected? And if a man can't carry his own State he's liable to get licked? Can't ye understand that?"

"I see; I see," said Mrs. Spoopendyke "It's as plain as day now. But suppose they all carry their own States, won't it be funny?"

"He, he, he," giggled Mr. Spoopendyke, with horrible grimaces. "It'll be the funniest thing ever known. If they do that, you just dramatize it. It'll beat nine circuses in a row. How's each going to carry his own State? Think he's going to turn it up on one end and roll it like a hoop?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, reflecting. "I don't exactly understand how they do it, but they ought to know what they are going to do before they accept the convention. I read" —

"Who cares a dod-gasted cent what ye read?" pealed forth Mr. Spoopendyke. "You don't know enough about politics to stuff a chicken. Who said anything about any measly convention? Git into bed, will ye? You got an idea that you put candidates in a pot like turnips and poke 'em with a fork, and the one that's

done first is elected. Oh! you're right; you've got the sense of it. With your statesmanship, all you want is four amendments and a motion to adjourn to be an Act of Congress." And Mr. Spoopendyke cast his clothing into a corner, flopped into bed, and pulled the clothes over his ears.

"I don't care," mused Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she turned out the gas and then began puttering around to see if everything was all right; "I know now that if Mr. English carries Mr. Garfield's State, and Mr. Garfield carries Mr. English's State, it will go hard with Hancock and Arthur, and Mr. Arthur is such a handsome man." And Mrs. Spoopendyke sidled into bed, planted her cold feet in the pit of Mr. Spoopendyke's stomach, and went to sleep dreaming that that worthy was running for the office of notary-public, and had carried every State in the Union, including "Governor's Ireland."

XXXVI.

DROPPING INTO POETRY.

"If you please, sir," said the young lady timidly, as the exchange editor handed her a chair, "I have composed a few verses, or partially composed them, and I thought you might help me finish them and then print them. Ma says they are real nice as far as they go, and pa takes the *Eagle* every day.

She was a handsome creature, with beautiful blue eyes and a crowning glory as yellow as golden-rods.

There was an expectant look on her face, a hopefulness that appealed to the holiest emotions, and the exchange editor made up his mind not to crush the longing of that pure heart if he never struck another lick.

"May I show you the poetry?" continued the ripe, red mouth. "You will see that I could n't get the last lines of the verses, and if you would please be so kind as to help me" —

Help her! Though he had never even read a line of poetry, the exchange editor felt the spirit of the divine art flood his soul, as he yielded to the bewildering music. Help her! well, he should smile.

"The first verse runs like this," she went on, taking courage from his eyes: —

"'How softly sweet the autumn air
The dying woodland fills,
And Nature turns from restful care—'

"To anti-bilious pills!" added the exchange editor, with a jerk. "Just the thing. It rhymes, and it 's so? You take anybody now. Half the people you meet are" —

"I suppose you know best," interrupted the young girl. "I had n't thought of it in that way, but you have a better idea of such things. Now the second verse is more like this: —

"'The dove-eyed kine upon the moor
Look tender, meek, and sad,
While from the valley comes the roar—'

"Of the matchless liver pad?" roared the exchange editor. "There you get it. That finishes the second so as to match with the first. It combines the fashions

with poetry, and carries the idea right home to the fireside. If I only had your ability in starting a verse with my genius in winding it up, I 'd quit the shears and open in the poetry business to-morrow."

"Think so?" asked the fair young lady. "It don't strike me as keeping up the theme."

"You don't want to. You want to break the theme here and there. The reader likes it better. Oh, yes! Where you keep up the theme it gets monotonous."

"Perhaps that 's so," rejoined the beauty, brightening up. "I did n't think of that. Now I 'll read the third verse: —

> "' How sadly droops the dying day,
> As night springs from the glen;
> And moaning twilight seems to say —

"The old man 's drunk again, would n't do, would it?" asked the exchange editor. "Somebody else wrote that, and we might be accused of plagiarism. We must have this thing original. Suppose we say; now, just suppose we say, 'Why did I spout my Ben?'"

"Is that new?" inquired the sweet, rosy lips. "At least I never heard it before. I don't know what it means."

"New? 'Deed it 's new. Ben is the Presbyterian name for overcoat, and spout means to hock. 'Why did I spout my Ben?' means why did I shove my topper. That 's just what twilight would think of first, you know. Oh, don't be afraid, that 's just immense!"

"Well, I 'll leave it to you," said the glorious girl, with a smile that pinned the exchange editor's heart to his spine. "This is the fourth verse: —

"'The merry milkmaid's sombre song
Re-echoes from the rocks,
As silently she trips along—'

"With holes in both her socks, by Jove!" cried the delighted exchange editor. "You see"—

"Oh! no, no!" remonstrated the blushing maiden. "Not that."

"Certainly," protested the exchange editor, warming up. "Nine to four she's got 'em; and you get fidelity to fact with a wealth of poetical expression. The worst of poetry generally is, you can't state things as they are. It ain't like prose. But here we've busted all the established notions, and put up an actual existence with a veil of genuine poetry over it. I think that's the best idea we've struck yet."

"I don't seem to look at it as you do, but of course you are the best judge. Pa thought I ought to say,—

"'As silently she trips along
In autumn's yellow tracks.'

Would n't that do?"

"Do! Just look at it. Does tracks rhyme to rocks? Not in the Brooklyn *Eagle* it don't. Beside when you say 'tracks' and 'rocks' you give the impression of some fellow heaving things at another fellow who's scratching for safety. 'Socks,' on the other hand, rhymes with the 'rocks' and beautifies them while it touches up the milkmaid, and by describing her condition, shows her to be a child of the very Nature you are showing up."

"I think you're right," said the sweet angel. "I'll

tell pa where he was wrong. This is the way the fifth verse runs: —

> "'And close behind, the farmer's boy
> Trills forth his simple tunes,
> And slips beside the maiden coy —'

"And splits his pantaloons; done it myself; know just exactly how it is. Why, bless your heart, you—"

Snip, snip, snip. Paste, paste, paste. But it is with a saddened heart that he snips and pastes among his exchanges now. The beautiful vision that for a moment dawned upon him has left but the recollection in his heart of one sunbeam in his life, quenched by the shower of tears with which she denounced him as a "nasty brute" and went out from him forever.

XXXVII.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF AN ORATOR.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he drew writing materials toward him, "now, I want your woman's wit. These fellows insist that I must respond to the toast 'Woman,' to-morrow night, and I must prepare a few remarks. If we both go at it, we 'll get up something nice."

"What you want," argued Mrs. Spoopendyke, entering into the spirit of the undertaking, and tapping her teeth with her thimble, — "what you want is woman in her various phases."

"What I want is a speech," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "They have n't put me down for a panorama. I want a short address, full of good points and pleasant things about the ladies. Now, I shall begin, 'Fellow-citizens'" —

"But women ain't fellow-citizens. I should say" —

"You'd say, 'fellow back hair,' that's what you'd say. I'm addressing the people, and they 're all men; don't you see? I've got to commence somewhere, and then I go on. Now, 'Fellow-citizens, regarding women, our origin, our companions, our posterity, our mothers, our wives and our daughters, what more can we say than that they give us life, make it happy, and soothe its decline?' How's that?"

"Is that the same woman?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, bending over the table. "It don't strike me that she would care to have it put in that way. Why not say, 'Fellow-citizens, we are assem'" —

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "I've got to open with a sentiment, and you can't find anything more graceful than that. Then I will go on: 'She rises in the cradle, reaches her meridian at the altar, and goes down in a flood of dew at the grave.' Can you grasp that?"

"I don't like that as well as the other," remonstrated Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You make her a mother, while she 's a baby, and as for the grave part, you don't stop to think that she may be another meridian by getting married again. I would say something like this, 'Fellow-citizens, we are assem'" —

"No, I won't either. Who 's going to get married again? Can't you see that I 'm only carrying out the

first idea of origin, companionship, and posterity? Rising in the cradle means giving us birth. Now you hold up. Suppose I say next: 'We revere her as mother, adore her as wife, and — and —' say what do we do for her as daughter?"

"Well, you might say, we dress her, and educate her, and keep an eye on her, and — and — and" —

"Spank her! dod gast it! Spank her! Why don't you say spank her?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "Can't you think of something poetical? I've got that we revere our mothers and adore our wives, and I want something for the daughter. Can't you originate something?"

"We provide a home for her. Would n't — ?"

"Yes, of course!" raved Mr. Spoopendyke. "That 's the idea! That fixes it! All you want now is two 'prolonged laughters,' four 'continued applauses,' one 'enthusiasm,' and 'a voice' to be an oration! 'Fellow-citizens, we furnish her with poached eggs and beans! Fellow-citizens, we revere her as mother, we adore her as wife, and as daughter, we change the sheets once a week! Fellow-citizens, we pass her the gravy! Fellow-citizens!'" yelled Mr. Spoopendyke, gesticulating like a horse-chestnut tree, — "'fellow-citizens, if she wants her beef rare, we give it to her! Fellow-citizens, we give her all the dod-gasted butter she can paste on her bread!' Is that what you want me to say? Expect I'm going to stand around and make a measly ass of myself? 'Fellow-citizens, as mother we revere her! Fellow-citizens, as wife we adore her! Fellow-citizens, to help a man get up a speech she 's the dod-slamdest donkey that ever raised a family!' wah-h-h-h," shrieked

Mr. Spoopendyke, purple in the face, "got any more suggestions! Know any more eloquence?" And the worthy gentleman leaned back in his chair speechless.

"Could n't you leave her out altogether?" recommended Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Can't you just revere her as mother and adore her as wife? As for the daughter, you might pass it over with saying, 'Fellow-citizens, we are assem'"—

"Yes, or I can cut her throat!" proclaimed Mr. Spoopendyke. "I can take her to the pound! I can salt her down for winter use! Dod gast the speech!" And Mr. Spoopendyke danced on the fragments of his notes. "To-morrow night I 'll answer that toast by telling what a dod-gasted old mule you 'd make of any man that would listen to you." And Mr. Spoopendyke banged himself into the bed like a beer spigot and went to sleep.

"Well," thought Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she took down her hair, and put it up again, "I don't see why he could n't say, 'Fellow-citizens, we are assembled here to say something poetical about woman, and the best I can say is, we show her when we don't always love her, and we love her when we don't always show it.' That 's sensible and it 's so," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke, falling over her husband's boots; and then the good woman opened the window on her spouse's side of the bed, and sticking a few pins in the pillow in case she should want them in the night, she went prayerfully to sleep.

XXXVIII.

THE YARN OF THE KISSING PARSON.

'T was on a cheerless, icy day,
The wind was wintry cold,
That we chanced to meet on a bleak side street,
A dominie man grown old.

His clothes were patched, his head unthatched,
And his trousers out at the knee,
And we heard this man proceed to scan,
This strange soliloquy:

"Oh! I bussed the widows, and I bussed the wives,
And I bussed the damsels free,
And I bussed young jades, and I bussed old maids,
Till the practice busted me."

And he pranced around and ripped and tore,
Like a maniac inspired,
Till we seized by the neck this pious wreck,
And timidly inquired:

"Oh! dominie man, will you explain,
These wondrous things you tell?
Expound to us how you could buss
So much and do it well!"

Then he settled down and scratched his head
In a meditative way,
Till he thought he'd quite got his story right
And then went on to say:

"I used to think when I started in,
That a preacher had a call
To buss around on hallowed ground,
According to St. Paul.

"So I bussed the widows, and I bussed the wives,
And I bussed the damsels free,
And I bussed young jades, and I bussed old maids,
Till the practice busted me.

"I went around from church to church
For forty years, about,
And never missed a single sister,
Till the deacons fired me out.

"Then I'd try again and get a job,
But again I'd have to hop;
A scriptural buss would make more fuss
Than a mule in a crockery shop.

"In vain I preached the apostle's creed,
And showed how wise was he,
But the holy salute always fetched a boot,
And I got the grand G. B.

"But it is the sisters' singular view
That my understanding melts;
They did n't mind till the undersigned
Got kissing some one else.

"Then they'd squawk and shiver, and raise a row,
And howl and carry on,
Though I'd kissed them all, big, medium and small,
From Genesis to John.

"So I quit the business, and I preach no more,
Nor neither sing nor pray;
But I am to be found a sitting round,
Remarking by the way:

"Oh! I bussed the widows, and I bussed the wives,
And I bussed the damsels free,
And I bussed young jades, and I bussed old maids,
Till the practice busted me!"

XXXIX.

A LITTLE LARGE IN THE NECK.

"I WISH, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, rolling over lazily in bed, — "I wish you would take the studs and cuff buttons out of the shirt I wore yesterday and put them in a clean one for me."

"Of course I will, you poor, dear, tired man," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "As if there were anything I would n't do for you." And she dove to the bottom of the bottom drawer and fished out a shirt that he had carefully stowed away under all the rest because he did n't have a collar to fit it. Then she adjusted the studs and sleeve buttons, and the fore-and-aft collar buttons, and laid it across the back of a chair.

"I sometimes wonder how I used to get along as a bachelor," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he pulled on the shirt. "Do you know, my dear, my daily life was made miserable by my shirts? But now —" And he kissed his wife affectionately, while she beamed with delight and bustled around to get everything in readiness so that he might have to ask for nothing.

Mr. Spoopendyke washed and arranged himself until he came to the collar part of the business, and then he hesitated.

"Where'd you find this shirt, anyway?" he asked, stretching his neck and glaring at himself in the glass. "How far'd you have to go to wrench this garment from obscurity, eh? What have you done to the neck of this shirt, anyhow? I have n't got a collar that 'll go half-way round the dasted thing."

Mrs. Spoopendyke fluttered up and examined the shirt in front, and then looked at the back, and finally thrust her hand between the band and the neck of her liege.

"I see what it is," she said, "you have n't pulled it down far enough."

"Pulled it down! Pulled it down! Where do you think this collar goes on, Mrs. Spoopendyke, around the waist? Maybe you think I wear a collar for a liver pad! Where'd you get it? Where'd you find it?"

"I found it in the drawer with the rest of your shirts, my dear. There's nothing the matter with it." And she patted the band on both sides of the neck, and then gave it a gentle tug in front. "There," she continued, smiling through her anxiety, "now it's all right."

"Oh, yes!" returned Mr. Spoopendyke, with a fear-

fully sardonic laugh. "Of course, it's all right. All you've got to do is to grin at anything, and that makes it all right. Look at it, will you? Just look at it. Don't you see the collar won't meet by a foot and a half? Grin at it once more, Mrs. Spoopendyke; just grin at it. It'll come all right; just grin; grin, will ye?"

"Perhaps it's shrunk," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, stroking the band tenderly and looking at it with a statistical eye, as if calculating how much the shrinking might have affected it.

"That's what it is," returned Mr. Spoopendyke, "now you've struck it. It's shrunk. When it was new it nearly choked me, now it's shrunk out like a barrel hoop. I'm going to hire you out for a telescope, Mrs. Spoopendyke; you can see further and see more than a minister's wife at a sewing society. Oh! it's shrunk, that's all; it's shrunk! Now, you pull on one side, and I will on the other, and we'll stretch it back smaller. Get hold and pull, will ye? It's only shrunk!"

"Let me put a stitch in it," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Put a stitch in it! It don't want anything more in it, I tell ye. It's got too much in it. What d'ye think this thing is, anyhow? A bedquilt, eh? Well, it's a shirt, from the shoulders down, and it's a dozen and a half shirts from the shoulders up. Where'd ye get it, anyway. Who told you this was the shirt I wanted? Ever hear me say anything about this shirt? Ever hear me allude to this shirt?"

"Well, I thought"—

"Undoubtedly, Mrs. Spoopendyke, unquestionably. You thought! That's the trouble with you. Too much mind, altogether. Next fall I'm going to build a wing on you and start a college. You thought! P'r'aps your exalted reasoning suggested a dod-blasted shirt, with a collar band that would go round your ideas. What are you going to do about it? How're you going to fix it? Going to stand there all day like a duck in the mud while I fatten up to fill the measly thing?"

"Suppose you try another shirt?" suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke timidly.

"That's it! Now you're thinking again! As if I had n't on shirt enough for six! Get out some more shirts, Mrs. Spoopendyke. Get 'em all out. Man wants but little here below and wants it all in shirts. Pull 'em out — dod gast the thing!"

R—i—i—i—p!

"There now," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as he hauled the wreck off and kicked it under the bed. "Now, p'r'aps you're satisfied, Mrs. Spoopendyke. I've busted the thing for good."

Mrs. Spoopendyke crawled under the bed, fished out the torn garment, rescued the studs and sleeve buttons, and introduced them to another shirt, with which Mr. Spoopendyke arrayed himself in silence.

"Another time, Mrs. Spoopendyke," said he, at length, "I'll thank you to let my shirts alone. I never had any such trouble when I was a bachelor, and hereafter you won't interfere with my things unless I give specific instructions. You understand me?"

"Yes, dear," smiled Mrs. Spoopendyke, as she followed her lord to breakfast.

XL.

HE WAS FROM DEADWOOD.

A BROOKLYN boy, who had spent some six months in the Black Hills, struck home last week and sauntered up Fulton street. He was dressed in an antelope-skin shirt, a pair of black-tail deer-skin pantaloons, beaded moccasins, and a white felt hat with a brim like a wagon wheel. He wandered into a saloon, thumped his fist on the counter, and howled for tan juice with a glittering eye.

"Will yer jine me, strangers?" he said to three or four gentlemen sitting at a table, adding as they hesitated, "I recken ye'd better. With me a invite means liquor or blood. Ye'd better come up."

They approached the bar, and all took beer, except one, who took cider, explaining that he had never touched spirits in his life.

"Wall, I'll be dogged!" roared the skin-decked traveller. "Ef yer was with me whar I hang out ye'd be inter a hole. 'Cause thar's whar yer got ter drink, whether yer drink er not. 'S luck!" And he poured in the poison.

"Where are you from, if I may ask?" inquired the cider man.

"From! right from the gulch. The clean-up put me a few thousand ahead and I'm wanderin' to see the sights. You bet!"

"From the mines?"

"Straight from jist whar yer reckoned I was, stranger. I been inter the Hills. Panned big, and now I 'm in fer a reg'lar old He. You bet!"

"How are things in the Hills now? Is business depressed, or are things flourishing?"

"I don't know nothin' about them big words, but ef yer want fer ter know how things is, they 're thar; right thar. I seen twenty millions o' money taken out o' my mine in fourteen hours. That 's trade! That 's hittin' gilt every wash, and don't yer forgit it; you bet!"

"How does Custer City seem to progress?"

"I ain't no bizness with no Custer City, — I'm a miner, I am."

"I saw in a recent paper that a number of troops have been moved to Fort Meade. Do they think there is any danger from Indians?"

"Injuns! Injuns, pard! Why there 's mor'n seven millions of 'em setten around on the rocks waitin' for a chance to lite in. Injuns! Why you don't know nothin' about Injuns here. I seen ten hundred thousand troops killed in an hour and a half. But I don't mind no Injuns! I tunnelled under four tribes camped half a mile from my claim, and every dogged one of them went up in the blast. You bet! There can't be no Injuns git away with a Hiller, and don't yer forgit it!"

"Deadwood must be rather a dangerous locality. I had no idea it was so exposed."

"Deadwood! Dangerous! Say, stranger, if yer ever learned to gamble, jist put yer money on the statement that Deadwood is dangerously placed. Yer 'll win, pard. Yer 'll scoop the pot each tussle, er count my judgment deuce box."

"Going to be in Brooklyn any length of time?"

"Jist come to take a squint at it. Say, show me round. Show me to a faro-bank. I've got too much dust fer comfort, and I'd like to drop or pick up. Show me around, stranger, and I'll make yer proud of yerself."

"I don't think you would find me a very good guide, for I've only been here a comparatively short time, but perhaps one of my friends who reside here would" —

"Don't belong here? Whar yer from, stranger? Whar's yer tepee?"

"I live in Deadwood," responded the stranger. "I'm only" —

If the young traveller will come around and pay for those drinks, all will be forgiven.

XLI.

OPENING SARDINES.

"Look here, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, tossing out the ribbons and laces in his wife's bureau drawer, "what 's become of that can-opener? I don't see it anywhere."

"What do you want of it?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, fluttering up to protect her trinkets, and trying to gain a little time.

"I want to open some sardines with it," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke, abandoning the drawer and hunting through the work-basket. "Think I want to comb my

hair with it? Imagine I want to write a letter with it? Well, I don't. I want some sardines. What have you done with it?"

"You might take your big knife," recommended Mrs. Spoopendyke. "The large blade is just the thing for that."

Mr. Spoopendyke seized the knife and bored away at one corner of the box, while his wife looked on with considerable distress.

"Had n't you better put a paper under the box? You 'll get the oil all over the tablecloth," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"No, I won't either," said Mr. Spoopendyke, as the knife plunged through and the oil spattered. "Serve you right if I did," he continued, ploughing away at the tin, while the grease flew in all directions. "It would teach you to put the can-opener where you could find it. What kind of housekeeping do you call this, anyhow?" he yelled, as the blade slipped out and closed up on his fingers.

"Did you hurt oourself, dear?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, anxiously.

"No, I did n't hurt myself," grinned Mr. Spoopendyke. "The dod-gasted knife struck the bone, or I would have been dead with agony an hour ago. Give me some ether," he howled. "Fetch me some chloroform. S'pose I 'm going to saw at this box any longer without an anæsthetic? Got an idea I 'm going to chip off a couple dozen fingers without something to deaden the pain? Where 's the laughing gas? Give me some laughing gas, whilst I extract these measly old fish." And Mr. Spoopendyke pranced around the room, and

then jabbed the knife into the box again and ripped away as though he was run by steam. "No use to hide away from me," he yelled, hacking at the box with all his might. "I know you 're in there, and there can't any dod-gasted sardine that ever was built get away from me. Come out, I tell ye!" and he seized a fish by the tail and slung him across the room. "You 're transacting business with Spoopendyke now." And he clawed out a handful of mashed sardines and slapped them down on a plate.

"Won't you spoil 'em, dear?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, dodging the flying heads and tails. "They won't be very good if you open 'em that way."

"Oh, won't they?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "If you don't like 'em that way, what 'd you ask for them for? Maybe you want me to take 'em out in a baby carriage. P'r'aps you've got an idea I ought to climb under 'em and lift 'em out. Maybe you want me to get into that box with a boat and take 'em out with a seine. Well, I won't, I tell you. Give me the tongs. I want that fish at the bottom. Where's the tongs? Gone to get married to the can-opener, have n't they?" And Mr. Spoopendyke grabbed another fish and fired him into the grate.

"Be patient, my dear," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, soothingly. "Make the opening a little wider, and they 'll come out."

"Hain't I patient?" shouted Mr. Spoopendyke. "P'r'aps you want me to sing to 'em, 'I wish I was an angel, and with the—' Dod gast the fish! Come out of that." And with a wrench Mr. Spoopendyke hauled off the top and disclosed the mangled remains of his

enemies. "Now give me a lemon." And he eyed the repast with anything but contentment. "Stir around and get me a lemon; quick now."

"Upon my word, my dear, I don't believe there's a lemon in the house," stammered Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I had one" —

"Oh, you had one!" proclaimed Mr. Spoopendyke, "only you're just out. If you'd been brought up right, you'd only need an awning and a family on the top floor to be a grocery shop. S'pose I'm going to eat the sardines raw? Think I'm going to swallow these fish alive? Gimme something to put on 'em, will ye?"

"What would you like, my dear?" queried Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Ink, dod gast it! Fetch me some measly ink! Got any nails? Can't you find some laudanum somewhere?" And Mr. Spoopendyke projected himself into the closet and pranced out with a bottle of arnica. "There!" he howled, as he dashed the contents over the sardines, "there's your fish all ready for you, and the next time you want me to open the things, you have a lemon, will ye? Find a can-opener, won't ye?" And Mr. Spoopendyke flopped into his easy chair and picked up the paper.

"Don't you want some of the fish!" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, after a long pause.

"No, I don't," growled Mr. Spoopendyke.

"But this is a fresh box," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, displaying the sardines in neat layers.

"How 'd you get it open?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke.

"With the can-opener," replied his wife. "I found it in your tool box where you put it to sharpen it."

"Maybe I put the lemon in there to sharpen that too," grunted Mr. Spoopendyke, pegging away at the box and looking up with his mouth full, but recognizing the taste of vinegar, he made some remark about some people only needing a handle and a cork to be a fortunatus jug, and having finished the lot, he demanded why his wife had n't asked for 'em if she wanted some, and went to bed with some incoherent observation on the absurdity of folks sitting around like martyrs with fish within reach.

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